

AUGUST 1910

192 Pages of Summer Reading

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE



THE MAGNET OF LOVE

Read "DULL JIM" by the author of "Madame Butterfly"

Published Monthly by THE RED BOOK CORPORATION, 136 to 134 South Street, CHICAGO



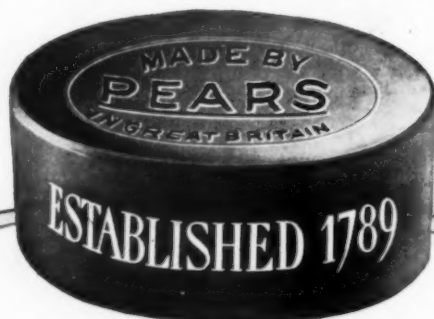
About Wrinkles

If the skin be kept soft and smooth, wrinkles will not easily develop—indeed they may be staved off almost indefinitely. But the question is, How is it possible to keep the skin in such a condition? The natural, and therefore the most effective, way of achieving this is to use

Pears' Soap

The soap that was invented 120 years ago for this special purpose, and has never been equalled for its exquisite emollient and skin-vivifying properties. Its action is at once protective and preservative, maintaining the skin in a healthy condition and retaining its youthful freshness.

The best
of all
aids to



Beauty of
skin and
complexion

OF ALL SCENTED SOAPS PEARS' OTTO OF ROSE IS THE BEST.

"All rights secured."

In writing to advertisers it is of advantage to mention THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

THE RED BOOK

MAGAZINE

EDITED BY KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN

CONTENTS FOR AUGUST, 1910

Copyright, 1910, by The Red Book Corporation. Entered at Stationers' Hall, London, England. All Rights Reserved

COVER DESIGN—"THE MAGNET OF LOVE"	Painted by Edmund Frederick	
To accompany "Dull Jim" page 609		
PHOTOGRAPHIC ART STUDIES	By Moffett Studio, Chicago	
FRONTISPIECE	Drawn by P. V. E. Ivory	
To accompany "Mr. Brown of the Hildegard" page 683.		
DULL JIM	John Luther Long	609
THE MAGNET OF LOVE. <i>Illustrated by Edmund Frederick</i>		
SI BEE'S CIRCUMSTANTIAL WHISKERS	Barton Wood Currie	625
THE LAW IN FINVILLE. <i>Illustrated by Horace Taylor</i>		
THE CRACK OF DOOM	Percy White	636
AÉRIAL WARFARE		
LITTLE MOTHERS	Emilie Benson Knipe	642
BABIES <i>vs.</i> BULL PUPS. <i>Illustrated by the author</i>		
LOVES OF WAR	Hugh Pendexter	652
WHEN DAD WAS A SOLDIER. <i>Illustrated by Hanson Booth</i>		
HELOISE AND THE LAW OF SIGNS	Pearl Wilkins	659
NEVER GO UNDER A LADDER ON FRIDAY WITH A BLACK CAT. <i>Illustrated by Irma Dérèmeaux</i>		
SHADOWS OF ROMANCE	F. K. Rehn, Jr.	670
THE BURGLAR'S LAST TRICK.		
THE THIRD STORY	F. Warner Robinson	676
THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN. <i>Illustrated by Gordon Stevenson</i>		
MR. BROWN OF THE HILDEGARDE	Broughton Brandenburg	683
LOVE IN MID-AIR. <i>Illustrated by P. V. E. Ivory</i>		
THE DIARY GIRL	Edith Rickert	693
HOW SHE WAS PURSUED. <i>Illustrated by F. R. Harper</i>		
VALOR'S VOTARY	John Barton Oxford	701
ALL FOR A GIRL.		
A BIT OF BRIBERY	William H. Osborne	706
DOROTHY DACRES WINS OUT AGAIN. <i>Illustrated by Jay Hambidge</i>		
THE BLUE PRINT OF BAKU	D. E. Dermody	718
AN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIR.		
ESCAPE	Richard Duffy	723
AN ARCTIC SUN STROKE. <i>Illustrated by Hermann Wall.</i>		
THE HIGH-GRADER	Edward S. Moffett	730
THE REDEMPTION OF JEFF. <i>Illustrated by E. Roscoe Shrader</i>		
THE VAGARIES OF WASATCH COMMON	George Frederick Stratton	741
HIGH FINANCE DUPLICITY.		
THE HOCUS-POCUS OF HETTY PEASE	Albert Lathrop Lawrence	747
WHEN IS A WIDOW NOT A WIDOW? <i>Illustrated by Florence Scovel Shinn</i>		
AMERICA'S FOREMOST ACTORS		753
SELECTED BY REPRESENTATIVE CRITICS. <i>Illustrated from photographs</i>		

TERMS: \$1.50 a year in advance; 15 cents a number. Foreign postage \$1.00 additional. Canadian postage 50c. Subscriptions are received by all newsdealers and booksellers, or may be sent direct to the Publishers. Remittances must be made by Postoffice or Express Money Order, by Registered Letter, or by Postage Stamps of 2-cent denomination, and not by check or draft, because of exchange charges against the latter.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Do not subscribe to THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE through agents unknown to you personally, or you may find yourself defrauded. Many complaints are received from people who have paid cash to some swindler, in which event, of course, the subscription never reaches this office.

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE is issued on the twenty-third of the month preceding its date, and is for sale by all newsdealers after that time. In the event of failure to obtain copies at news-stands, or on railway trains, a notification to the Publishers will be appreciated.

Advertising forms close three weeks prior to the time of issue. Advertising rates on application.

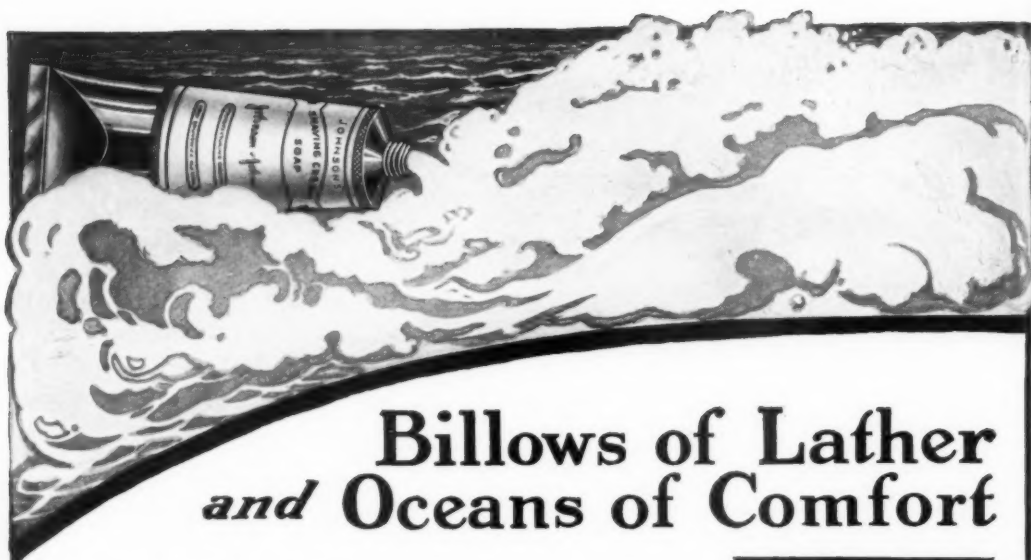
THE RED BOOK CORPORATION, Publishers, 158-164 State Street, CHICAGO

LOUIS ECKSTEIN, President CHARLES M. RICHTER, Business Manager

RALPH K. STRASSMAN, Advertising Manager, 1172 Fifth Avenue Building, New York

R. M. PURVES, New England Representative, 201 Devonshire St., Boston LONDON OFFICES, 5 Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London, W. C.

Entered as second-class matter April 25, 1905, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.



Billows of Lather and Oceans of Comfort

"IN THE GOOD OLD SUMMER TIME" man's face requires special care. The beard grows faster, thicker and wiry thus necessitating more frequent shaving. The skin is often sunburnt and becomes sore and tender. The ordinary old style shaving soap irritates the face and produces an uncomfortable shave regardless of the keenness of the razor.

There is only one form and kind of soap that contains all the necessary ingredients for perfect, easy shaving. Billows of luxuriant lather and oceans of comfort are embodied in every tube of

Johnson's Shaving Cream Soap

It is the most modern form of shaving soap—a clean, wholesome cream which bursts into rich, lasting lather that does not dry. A lather that instantly softens the toughest beard without mussing finger rubbing, soothes abraded or sunburnt skin, leaving the face smooth and refreshed.

"I never knew that soap had so much to do with shaving until I tried Johnson's Shaving Cream Soap."

William R. Stobbe,
Philadelphia, Pa.

EVERY DRUGGIST SELLS IT 25 Cents a Tube—150 Shaves

A Twenty-Shave Trial Tube mailed to any
address upon receipt of a 2 Cent Stamp.

Johnson & Johnson Dept.
24-0

New Brunswick, N. J.



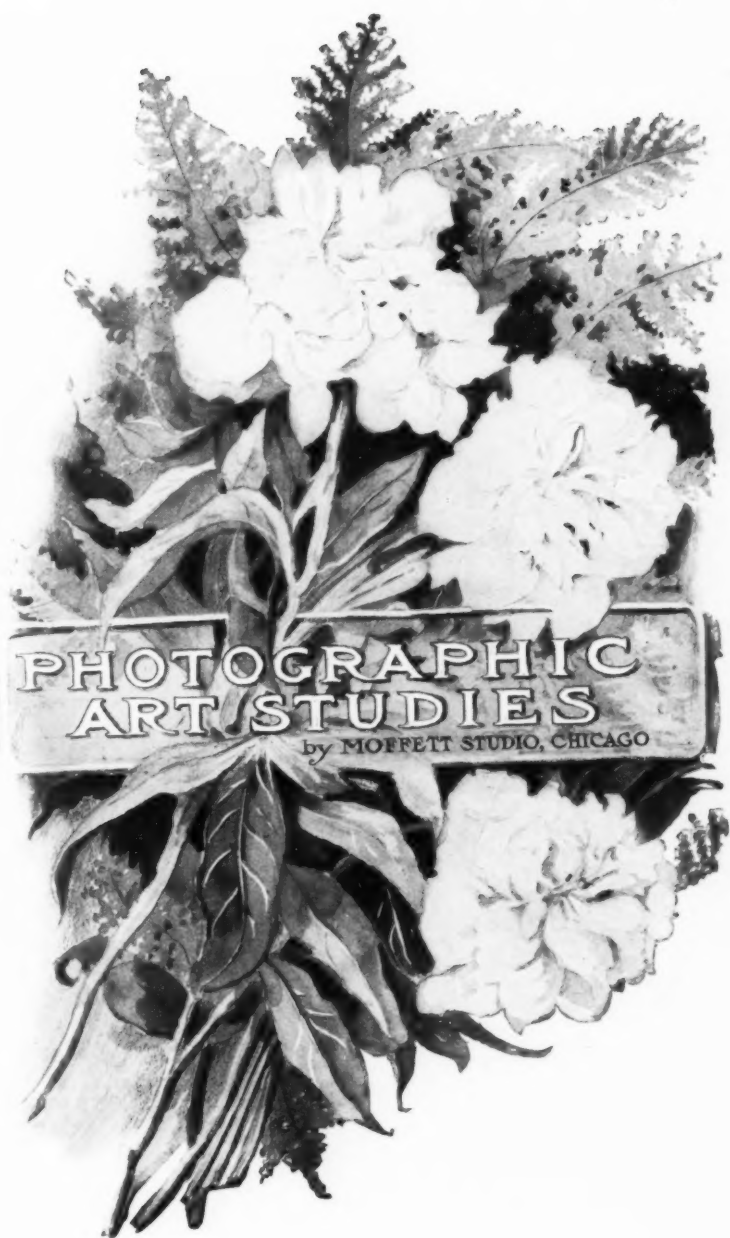
Quick Start



Smooth Going



Great Finish





MISS BETSY BACON
in Vaudeville



MISS MARY BOLAND
with John Drew in "Inconstant George"



MISS BESSIE WYNN
starring in "Miss Nobody from Starland"





PHOTOGRAPH BY MOFFETT STUDIO, CHICAGO.

MISS GRACE LARUE
starring in "Miss Molly May"



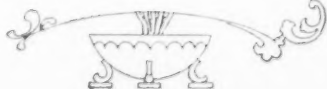
MISS GRACE VanSTUDDIFORD
starring in "The Golden Butterfly"





PHOTOGRAPH BY MOFFETT STUDIO, CHICAGO.

MISS MARIE TEMPEST
who is starring in "Penelope"



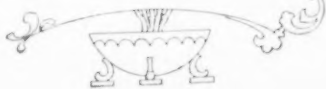


MISS JULIE HERNE
in "The Battle"



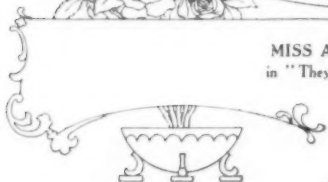


MISS VIRGINIA HAMMOND
in "Arsene Lupin"



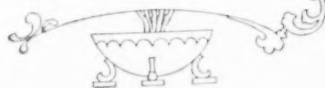


MISS ALICE HAMLIN
in "They Loved A Lassie"





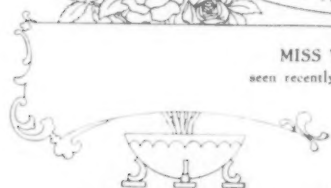
MISS STELLA DORSELL
in "The Queen of the Moulin Rouge"





PHOTOGRAPH BY MOFFETT STUDIO, CHICAGO.

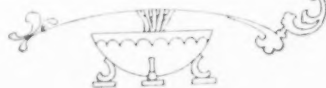
MISS VERA McCORD
seen recently in "Via Wireless"





PHOTOGRAPH BY MOFFETT STUDIO, CHICAGO.

MISS ADELE RITCHIE
in "The Girl and the Taxi"





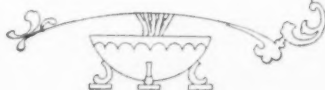
PHOTOGRAPH BY MOFFETT STUDIO, CHICAGO.

MISS VIVIAN ROGERS
in "Old Dutch"





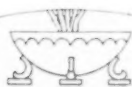
MISS STELLA TRACEY
in "The Follies of 1909"





PHOTOGRAPH BY MOFFETT STUDIO, CHICAGO.

MISS LILLIAN O'NEILL
in "The Chorus Lady"





MISS EILEEN KEARNEY
in "The Girl and the Taxi"



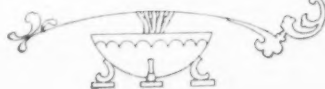


MISS ALICE MAY SULLIVAN
in "The Girl Question"





MISS MARJORIE ARMOUR
in "The Flirting Princess"





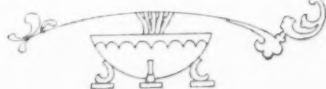
PHOTOGRAPH BY MOFFETT STUDIO, CHICAGO.

MISS MAIDEL TURNER TAYLOR
in "The Vacuum"



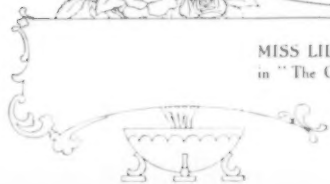


MISS ETHEL L. YERKES



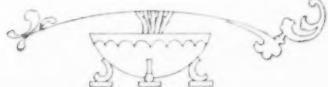


MISS LILLIAN THACHER
in "The Call of the Cricket"





MISS MAY HANNA
in "Madame Sherry"





MISS HARRIET STANDON
with Sam Bernard in "The Girl and the Wizard"

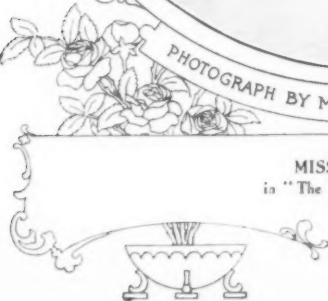




MISS LOTTIE VERNON
playing in "Miss Innocence"



MISS ETTA CURRY
in "The Pied Piper of Hamelin"





MISS HELEN CONVERSE
playing leading roles with Donald Robertson

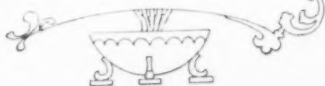


MISSSES DOLLY KING and J. MARSHALL
in Vaudeville





MISSSES DOLLY KING and J. MARSHALL
in Vaudeville





Half way down the storm struck them with its full fury

To accompany "Mr. Brown of The *Hildegard*"—page 683

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

August 1910

Vol. XV No. 4

Dull Jim

by

John Luther Long

author of "Madame Butterfly" etc.

Illustrations by Edmund Frederick—Decorations by Lawrence Kennedy

I—JIM AND JIM'S WIFE

JIM," said Mrs. Brood, across the breakfast-table, "I'm tired of cooking for a blockhead. I'm going to leave you."

Jim choked, but finally said, with a smile:

"Ye—yes. Of course—"

As if it were the most natural thing in the world, whereas it had happened only once before.

"You don't seem dam' glad!" gibed his wife.

"Well—no," faltered Jim. "But—I *am* pretty rough for such a nice girl. You'll need some money—a good deal, I expect—like the last time. I'll bring you some this evening. I think your relatives—where you go—aint rich. Pinker will advance—"

"I will not be here this evening," said his wife.

"Oh!" slipped out of Jim. "Mu—must you go so soon?"

"That's what I must," laughed his wife. "Or else it's all off!"

"Then I'll send it up by Johnny. He's honest—"

"Don't bother."

Jim played, a moment, with his napkin.

"You haven't had all the money you ought—a pretty girl like you. You ought to have nice frocks and lots of 'em. Pinker's talking about a partnership. Then I'll have a little more."

Jim wasn't exactly certain why he had said all that—very much for Jim.

If, subconsciously, he fancied that it might keep her from going, she did not leave him in the dark.

"I shall have more money than you and Pinker together, Jim."

"Oh!" said Jim.

His wife was fitting her hat coquettishly upon her pretty hair.

"Has your mother got her fortune?"

"No," laughed his wife, "but her daughter has—nearly six feet of it!"

"Oh!" said Jim again.

His wife turned upon him with a hatpin in her mouth. She was really very pretty. Much too pretty, most people thought, for such an indifferent looking chap as Jim, and extraordinarily feminine.

"Jim," she said, "is it possible that you don't—understand?"

"Sure!" said Jim.

Jim, like most dull people, was wont to cloak his lack of comprehension with a protestation of complete understanding.

"Yes, yes!" he added, hastily, "of course I understand."

"It couldn't be helped, you know. Those things happen—that's all."

She slapped him on the back.

"Ye—you're happy, aint you, to get away, did-dear?"

"Did-dear!" mocked his wife.

"You—you were—the other time," half-smiled Jim.

"Shut up!" cried his wife, savagely.

"I know you don't like to recall *that* going away. But I do," said Jim, humbly.

"Why?" demanded his wife, stridently.

"You came back," answered Jim.

"You didn't like your relatives."

"Oh!"

She had thought it might be some better understanding, at last, of *why* she went away—and why—she had come back.

"If you expect that—*this* time—"

"No, no!" interrupted Jim. "Oh, no." He did not want her negative in very words. "But—here's a key."

He had taken the key from the ring and was handing it to her.

"Not on your life!" cried his wife, pushing it away.

Jim kept it toward her.

"You might want to stop in—just stop in—to see how bad I'm getting along—without you—and I mightn't be at home. You can never tell."

She took the key. It was the easiest way.

"No," she laughed, "one can never tell."

Jim felt better.

"And I suppose you'd be fool enough to take me back?"

"Of course!" said Jim, huskily.

"And be glad?"

"Oh, my God!" breathed Jim.

"No matter what had—ahem—happened?"

Jim couldn't trust his tongue, so he nodded his head.

"I want you to be happy," he said, then. "And—if you're happier away from me than with me—well, I'll be—honest!"

His wife had put on her coat and was pulling it in to her pretty figure.

Jim watched her, breathing hard. A nearby clock struck.

"Hello! I'm going to be late. Pinker hates that. And it's one of the things he likes about me—that I never am. I'm going to be his partner—"

He started toward the door, then, distractedly back.

"I'll risk that once and take you to the train!"

"No, you wont!"

"You'd rather go alone?"

"I sha'n't go alone."

Jim paused, and tried to think what that meant.

"You hate loneliness," he said.

"I'm not going to be lonely. Sure you understand, Jim?"

"Oh, yes, yes!" averred Jim.

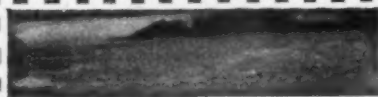
"Well, if you don't, it's up to you. I've spoken about as plainly as I can. More plainly than most of them do." She laughed, then added, "Most of them don't speak at all. They leave a note!" The clock struck the quarter.

"Shall I kiss you?" asked Jim, uneasily, putting on and taking off his hat.

"No, thank you."

"I know you don't like to be—"

Jim held out his hand, but both of hers were busy with a small bag. At the door Jim turned, suppressing a madness within.



"Well—good-by—Freda."

"Good-by, Jim."

She was still busy with the bag. Jim opened the door.

"Got the key?" he asked.

She held it up to him without looking.

Jim stepped out and then staggered back.

"I—I'll put away the dishes."

She nodded.

A dull, mad moment. Jim still stood in the door.

"Say, Jim," she said, with a bit of pity, "as I told you, these things happen—and that's *all*! Well, why don't you let 'em happen to you?"

Jim passed a hand over his forehead.

"I don't—"

He had almost said, "I don't understand."

"If you come across a nice girl, Jim, old man, don't be a fool about me. Marry her!"

"Marry her!" gasped Jim.

"Get a divorce. I'll give you reason! Now, get out! Good-by!"

She pushed him out of the door and closed it.

"If he had the key he'd come back," she laughed, throwing it into the bag. "Lucky!"

II—HAD JIM LOST ANYONE?

When Jim returned in the evening, tired and gray, he put his hand into his pocket for the key, then remembered that he had given it to his wife. He stood wearily, a moment, on his doorstep, looking at the closed blinds, then turned away.

"I guess I'm glad," he mused. "I'd be lonely—with her away. Empty—everything empty! That's how it was the other time. Funny how everything

goes when she does! Just a little bunch of fine dry-goods! Well—"

Jim wandered on aimlessly, thinking about the things she had said—especially that about finding another girl. How *could* he marry—another girl? What reason *could* she give him? You see how dull Jim was!

Presently he had gone half-way around the block and found himself directly in front of the little house which backed up to his. He knew it by the curtain in the bay window. In the parlor sash was a dingy sign of "Lodger Wanted." Jim knocked, and, presently, went in.

"Could I get a room here?" he asked of the woman who came.

"For how long?" she asked in turn.

"I can't say, exactly," answered Jim, for he *would* not say—how long his wife *might* be away. Something within him refused.

"I don't take transients," said the woman. She rose dismissively.

"Wait! Wait!" said Jim, hoarsely, forced to say it. "I think—I think it will be for—some time."

"Lost anyone?" asked the woman, meaning by death.

"Yes," answered Jim, not meaning that.

"Wife?"

"No—oh, no!" said Jim.

"Oh," said the woman, "got no wife?"



"N—no."

"I have nothing but the second story back."

"I'll take it," said Jim, eagerly.

"I dunno," said the woman. "It's my daughter's room. She may come back any time."

"I'll take it," repeated Jim, not heeding what was said about the daughter.

"She's a nice girl, my Madge. The men are crazy about her. But I want her to marry some one a little older than herself—a steady man—"

"I'll take it," said Jim.

"It gets pretty hot under the tin roof."

"I'll take it."

"And it's nearly summer."

"I'll take it."

"Madge—"

But Jim had stumbled up the stairs into the second story back and closed the door—locked it.

Then he opened the blinds and sat by the window which faced his own little house. Often she had flown out of the house when she "felt that way" and had come back the same night. But the dawn broke and no light had come into the windows of the little house opposite.

At six o'clock Jim put on his hat and went to work. It wouldn't do to be late two days in succession. He had forgotten to eat.

After that Jim sat at the window every night and watched for the light to come into the windows opposite. And, then, when he went to bed, he lay with his face that way—and the blinds wide. After a while he would

sleep—not much—waking every hour—with his eyes at once wide—toward the little house across the alley. In these nights, of course, Jim thought things. But never evil. Instead of matters growing worse and worse, as he thought about them, they grew better and better. For, more and more, as he thought, he found excuses for his wife. He had a rough bit of philosophy upon which he lived. It was simply to think the best and not the worst. Freda had gone to visit her relatives and he did not blame her. He must be tiresome to her.

Then, one night as he watched, a knock came upon his door. He absently opened to the landlady and her daughter.

"Why don't you have a light?" the woman asked.

"Why?" questioned Jim, dully.

"Well—you can't receive ladies in the dark—"

And she struck a match which she had brought with her.

"Don't!" cried Jim, snatching and extinguishing the match.

"Excuse me," he said then, gently and sanely, as he realized his rudeness. "But—"

"Sitting in the dark this way is going to make you—" the woman touched her head—"see things!"

"It's pleasanter," said Jim, apologetically, "I'm always tired in the evening. I work hard."

"Oh, well"—laughed the woman.

Jim was so glad to have her waive his eccentricity that he became almost amiable.

"There is a bright moon! See!" He opened the blinds wider. "Isn't that better than a hot gaslight?"

Now, for the first time, the daughter spoke. And her voice was very pleasant.



"You might want to step in"

"It's romantic, anyhow," she said, and a bit of a smile went with it.

And Jim, for the first time, was aware of the presence of the girl. He turned to look at her. A very pretty, youthful face she had, with serious eyes. So, at least, the moon told him. Jim couldn't have told what was in his mind—so dull was he—but it was the thought that this was not precisely the sort of daughter his landlady ought to have.

"But," laughed the woman, "you can't see how pretty my daughter is. And I want you and her to be good friends. She don't like the hobble-de-hoys. She prefers serious men."

The daughter had flushed and turned away at her mother's speech, but, she turned again to him. A long look passed between them.

"I see," said Jim, very gently.

"I hope, too," said the girl, halting, "that we shall be—friends."

She held out her hand and Jim took it. She let it remain. Jim did not release it. Something made his heart beat with more ardor.

"Mother tells me," the girl went on, "that you have lost some one—"

Jim dropped the pretty hand. He was appalled. He had forgotten!

"Yes," answered Jim, contritely.

He turned toward the window.

"I am a nurse," said the girl, "and am used to—sorrow. I broke down and they gave me a furlough. I shall be here a little while. Perhaps I can help you—somehow?"

"I'm all right!" said Jim, roughly, with his back to her.

There was a moment of silence.

"Good-night," said the girl, then.

"I don't think you're very polite to a lady!" said the woman.

"Come, mother!" said the girl.

Jim did not turn. The door opened—closed. He still stood at the window. Presently his nostrils began to inhale some fragrance the girl had left behind. It was very pleasant to Jim.

The woman came again the next evening.

"Madge aint mad at you," she said, "she pities you."

"Why?" asked Jim.

"Well—like she does her patients, I expect."

"I aint sick," said Jim, rudely.

"She thinks you are."

"I aint!" said Jim.

"What do you think of her?"

"Who?"

"Madge."

"Oh! She's all right."

"That's what she thinks about you. She's fond of serious people. Say—ever think of getting married?"

"No," said Jim.

"You ought to. I expect you got some money?"

"Not much."

"Well, then, you're awful straight. You pay everything right up. And you're always home at night. I think you'd make a good husband—for a serious girl—like Madge."

Jim said nothing.

"Even if you're married," the woman went on, "any one can see that there's something wrong. I don't see any wife around—nor no other woman. I expect you could get a divorce. There must be lots of reason. You know, if a man's wife leaves him—that's desertion, and he can get a divorce—if he don't get foolish and make up with her. Or a man, either. That's how I got mine. A man's a fool

to waste his time over a woman who don't care. There's as good fish in the sea as ever was caught."

Jim's dull mind caught upon the fish—nothing else.

"No, there aint," he said. "Fishing's mighty bad where I go. And it's getting worse all the time."

The woman laughed.

"Madge is right, I expect. You do need treatment. I pity you, too. I hope you wont get violent while you're here."

Not only did Jim not understand this, it never went far enough into his mind to cause inquiry concerning it.

Nevertheless, later, came the strange thought, again, that nature had, somehow, made a mistake in giving such a mother such a daughter.

III—WHILE THE DAYS WERE STILL LONG.

One day, as Jim was coming home in the evening, while the days were still long, he met Madge. She was some distance from home and was walking rapidly.

"Wait!" she laughed, and held out the pretty, small hand.

It was a mere flake, and Jim refused it, ruefully showing his own, black from handling his tools.

"Nonsense!" cried the girl, seizing his hand and pulling him after her. "That is the only real hand there is—the one which works. I'd rather shake it than the lily-white one of a millionaire! Come! You must let me walk home with you. Such a beautiful day—such air—! Doesn't it make you happier to be just a part of it?"

"Why—ye-yes," said Jim.

As they walked on he looked at her pretty, glowing face, and her neat clothing, and had a strange thought.

To others it might not have been a good thought. But it was so, to dull Jim, who had never had an evil one in his small life.

"I wonder if she's as white and round as Freda?" he thought.

"What do you do?" asked the girl.

"Do?" counter-questioned Jim.

No one on earth had ever taken the trouble to ask what he did. He was not certain that Freda knew.

"Plumb," said Jim.

"Oh, you're a plumber!" said the girl, with interest. "That's fine. If plumbers were all conscientious in their work—this would be a different world!"

She laughed at her banal ending.

And Jim laughed, too.

"I am," he said, simply.

"If they would only think—think—think! Invent, invent, invent! What a bacteria-killer good plumbing is!"

"I've been doing a little inventing," said Jim, with the first pride in himself he had ever felt.

"Oh! What?" asked the girl.

Jim was ready to retreat. But she wouldn't let him. She asked again:

"What—what? Every invention in plumbing is important—very!"

"Not much for sanitary," said Jim, "but only for convenience. I got a scheme for milling the edges of the turns on valves. You know how they slip through soapy fingers."



"Don't I!" cried the girl. "That's a very good invention!"

"The milling is self-cleansing. It won't fill up with dirt or soap and make the handling worse than before. It has openings back of the milling. The dirt or soap pushes through when the fingers press on it and falls down and is washed into the drain."

"That will be fine for hospitals. You know, one of the difficulties is to keep our hands aseptic."

And, all the way home he talked about his work—and, even, himself!

"Say, I'm ashamed," he said, just before they reached the little house, in the very first speech of "politeness" of his life, "but you got me going. It's your own fault if you're tired of my chinning."

"I'm not tired of your chinning," said the girl, seriously. "And, doesn't it make you feel encouraged in your work to have some one else interested in it?"

"Why—yes," admitted Jim, with genuine surprise. "Only—it's kind of—new!"

"Now, listen!" cried the girl. "I've got some books you'll like to read, and some I'd like to read to you!"

"Good!" said Jim. "That'd be great! Reading to me!"

And he meant nothing.

After that, from time to time, the mother and the daughter knocked at Jim's door. Jim told them of other inventions—there seemed to be a new one each day! Sometimes the girl read.

"Aren't you more active than you used to be?" asked the girl, one night.

"Why—yes," said Jim, wondering.

"Brain a little clearer and surer— isn't it?"

"Why—yes."

It was Jim himself—if you can believe that—who asked the question:

"Why is that?"

"I think," said the girl, quietly, "that it is because we talk things over here. Don't you think more frequently now of 'inventions'?"

"Yes," nodded Jim. "Pinker's on. We're partners now."

"And, sometimes they are suggested by our talks here, aren't they?" asked the girl.

"Yes—most always, now," answered Jim.

"You find, don't you," asked the nurse, "that new ideas come to you as you *make* the thing you have invented?"

"Yes—always."

"I think," the girl went on, "people are like magnets—"

"I know about magnets!" Jim cried out, happily. "It's in one of the books you got me."

He produced from his pocket a small pair of magnets.

"I got 'em," he explained, a bit shyly, "because I wanted to see 'em work!"

As he put them down on the table he began to laugh. Suddenly he stopped.

"What's the matter?" asked the girl.

"I laughed," said Jim, sullenly.

"Well? Isn't it good to laugh?" chided the girl.

"I got no business to," said Jim.

"But you have!" insisted the girl, "no matter—what—who—you have—lost!"

"You dunno!"

Jim rose and looked out of the window. He loosed the shutter.

The girl drew the magnets to her and placed them a short distance apart.

"Jim!" she called, pre-occupiedly.

Jim turned like a flash.

"Oh! Excuse me!" cried the girl, lowering her flushed face.

"Your mother says you mustn't?" asked Jim, sullenly.

"No."

Then he remembered how little likely such a mother was to prevent such a daughter from using Jim's first name. "Madge!" said Jim.

"Did it ever occur to you that two magnets, six inches apart, must be very lonely?" smiled the girl, without the least intention.

"Lonely?" wondered dull Jim. "How's that?"

The head of the girl went deeply into the arms on the table. Jim knew by the pretty, young shoulders that she was sobbing. But, only so. Four times he reached out to touch her. Each time he got a bit nearer. The fifth time he would have reached her. But the wind slammed the shutter. He turned his back and looked out, his nails biting into his palms.

"Don't they seem lonely, now? Dead?"

Jim turned to see that the girl was regarding the magnets. Her head was between the pretty hands. The voice was not yet free of its tears. Jim stood over her, and, again reached out to her.

"Only two pieces of steel. But—"

She began to move them together.

"See how they wake up and live as they approach—understand one another—now they would fly together—if I would let them—nothing keeps them apart—but me—The moment I take my finger off—"

"Take it off!"

Jim savagely snatched it away.

The two pieces clicked together.

"They were two, a little while ago," breathed the girl, "now they are one!"

"And it's mighty hard to get them apart!" added Jim, showing her that it was.

"That's because each has, at last, found the one right thing to cling to," smiled the girl. "It would seem cruel to part them!" There was a pause.

"I think people are just like that," mused the girl, diffidently, indeed almost unconsciously, "when the two who belong together come together. Don't you think God meant that no one is complete without another?"

"How's that?" asked dull Jim.

"Maybe every man needs some woman. And every woman needs—some man. I suppose that's why God made us so different. And, often, something, not as plain as my finger, keeps them apart."

"Mebby," admitted Jim, amazed at all this, and, more amazed that he understood it all.

"And, then, when the right two come together, they are just like these magnets—they are one—each being nothing without the other."

"D'you mean you—me?" cried Jim, ferociously.

"Yes," whispered the girl, letting her head again fall into the arms on the table. "I am ashamed. But, oh, perhaps it is a sin to let happiness



pass you by because you are afraid to let it know that you are there!"

"I expect that magnet and some other piece of iron would come together just the same," said he, hardly.

"Yes," whispered the girl, dragging herself out.

"Mistake!" said Jim to himself. "Right kind of daughter for mother."

But when she did not come the next night, Jim was restless, and, instead of sitting silently and watching the windows opposite, he paced the apartment, and, several times opened the door and looked down the steps.

Neither did she come the night following. But her mother did—and apologized for her daughter.

"You're so much better Madge thought you wouldn't need her just now. She's gone to visit Annie Bray."

"When will she come back?" demanded Jim, curtly.

"I can't say," answered the mother. "If she don't get back to-morrow,"

said Jim, savagely striding the room, "I'm going away."

"Why?" asked the woman.

"I can't stand it!" said Jim.

"What?" asked the woman.

"I don't know!" thundered Jim, stopping in front of her and stamping. "Ask her. She knows. She's done something to me!"

The woman, a bit frightened, said hastily:

"I'll telephone her to come back."

IV—THEN THE LIGHT CAME

And so, the following evening, as Jim sat in the darkness, facing the

door, with his back to the window, he heard her arrive. And then, presently, she came—alone. Jim started toward her with his arms savagely out.

"Good-evening," she said cheerily, and held out her hand.

Jim took it tamely.

"Why did you go away?" he demanded.

"Sit down, Jim," she said—and he obeyed. "Are you—worse?" A bit of laugh went with the hesitating last word.

"Yes. What is the matter with me?"

"Nothing—nothing at all," said the girl.

"Yes, there is," said Jim, doggedly. "I'm crazy. I usen't to feel that I had a brain. But now it whips me all about. And you did it. I was asleep up there. You woke me."

"Let us thank God," said the girl.

"No!" shouted Jim. "I wish I was as dumb as before! I wish I felt like a whipped, kicked cur all the time again! I wish I thought *you* were like her!"

"Who?" asked the girl.

Jim only slammed the shutter shut.

"That bad woman over there? Who left a good husband for a life of shame?" she asked.

Jim clapped his hands on his ears and cried "*no*," like a madman.

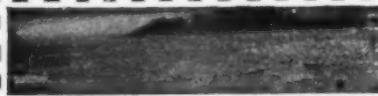
"I'm a pig," he said, opening the shutters.

"No," said the girl, softly, "but perhaps there is something you ought to talk to me about."

"What am I to do when you go away to stay? You were away one night and I was in hell."

There was a long silence. They looked toward each other in the half-darkness. Then the head of the girl fell wearily.

"That is not for me to say," she an-





They stood a moment and watched the light

answered, very gently. "I am only a woman. And it is ours to wait—and it is yours to end the waiting—or to make it eternal. You are a man. Often we get tired, very tired—we women—of giving—giving—always giving—and never getting, Jim."

And, just at this moment, came that saying of his wife:

"Jim, if you come across a nice girl—marry her."

"Look here," said Jim, savagely, "would you marry me?"

The girl slowly lifted her head.

"Yes," she said.

Both were silent a long while.

"Well, there *is* something. But—"

Into the corner of Jim's eye came a light. It was reflected from some other building into his room. He quickly turned to the windows he had forgotten to watch. They were dark.

"Was that a light in those windows?" asked Jim, of the girl, savagely.

"I saw none," answered the girl.

"Wait! Wait here!" he cried, and ran down the stairs and out at the door. He pounded and rang and called at his own door, but there was no answer. He went back to his lodgings. As he passed the door of the girl's room, he heard sobbing. As at that other door, he knocked and called, but, again, there was no answer.

"I couldn't do it—now!" Jim called through the door.

"You must—now!" was his answer.

He tried the door. It was locked.

For four days Jim kept his door locked. Then a gentle knock came upon it and he opened.

Madge was in a thin negligée and her pretty hair was on her shoulders. Her face was very white and she carried a book in her hand.

"Mother says that you haven't eaten for four days," she said, gently. "May I order you some food?"

Jim shook his head.

"Then—" she pointed to the house across the way and was, for a moment, unable to speak—"you must go."

"Who told you?" asked Jim.

"You did. It is your house. She who went away with another man is your wife. You are waiting for her light to know that she has come back. She will come back."

"Why?"

"Any woman would come back to you—Jim."

"I didn't understand then. But I do now. You made me. I can't go now!"

Madge opened the book and read: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow!"

Then the light appeared in the windows opposite. They stood a moment and watched it. Madge softly opened the door.

"You must go," she said, at last. "Remember!—as snow—as wool—white!"

"I can't," said Jim. "I know—now. I'm not white myself, any more!"

"What will you do? She is there—repentant—or she wouldn't *be* there—will you—can you—leave her alone—there?"

"Can you?" asked Jim.

"No," sobbed the girl. "Jim, there is a God and he has done this thing."

"No!" thundered Jim, "you have done it. You made me an equal, a superior. I am the *man* in this partnership. I can't go back to the crawling worm business. Look at me!"

The girl lifted her wet face with love in every lineament.

"Yes!" she breathed.

"I look different?"

"Yes!"

"My face tells you that I know something now?"

"Yes!"

"The books you gave me!"

"Oh, my dear Jim, did even they help?"

"I stand straight. I am six feet now. I was only four."

"Oh, yes!"

"I *am* a man," thundered Jim, beating the table. "And I know. You have made me a man. You have told me about her."

He pointed toward the light.

"I?"

"You. How could I be what you have made me and not know—that there are—there never were—any relatives for her to go to. And, yet you send me back there to crawl like a worm, again!"

"Ah, beloved, there will be no more of that," said the girl. "She will feel and know your new manhood as I do. You need never tell a woman who loves a man what he is. She knows! Oh, Jim, if you do not go, all that I have suffered—suffer now—and shall suffer—will be in vain. I cannot marry you unless we know! Unless you try. Then—If—You wont let it all be in vain? I know what it all means. God has done it. If He has said that one's sins, though scarlet, shall be as white as snow, so it will be. You cannot go to her because her sin *is* scarlet now. But, suppose God is as good as his word and makes her clean? Oh, as she was at first? What then? Though you married me, you would go to her—you would have to.

And, if God has sent her back to you, it is because it is His purpose to make her white as snow! Go, Jim. And, let us make this bargain: If God does *not* do this miracle, then you shall come back to me. I will wait—wait endlessly. I know that you will play fair with her—and me. Yes, my dear, dear Jim, and with yourself. If it is meant that you are to have me—so it will be. If not, let there be such a light in your window as you looked for. And, when I know, in mine. Jim, dear, oh, my Jim, God sent me only to help you—and that is done—He is through with me. I thought it was for something else—but it was only for that—to help—prepare you—for this. God has His price for all things. His price for this is *my* heart. I have given it. It took four days—there—in my room. But it is done. *I* have paid for *you*. That is all the sweetness I am to have. We don't know why God should take innocent *me* and make me pay. But there is some reason for it. Perhaps it is that you might be ready to understand and save her *now*. Because—now is the one time she *can* be saved. Let us think what may happen if you do not! Where will she go?"

"Stop!" cried Jim. "I must."

"You must," whispered the girl.

Jim passed down and out.

"I — will — pray," whispered



Madge, "until I know that all is well. God will—must tell me that. Then I will show a light in the window. Then let me see her—just once!"

III—THE DUST OF A YEAR

The door stood wide open when he arrived. It was cold—raining. He passed in and closed it. The echo was still hollow with emptiness. He felt beneath his feet the dust of the year which had passed. Just where he halted, in the little hall, was where they had parted. In the small dining-room were yet the remains of their last breakfast together. This he saw by the light of matches. At last he found her in their tiny kitchen, on the floor, beside the stove she had sought for warmth. She was dressed in some wonderful, glittering finery—wet and bedraggled.

He lifted her into the rocking chair he had made comfortable with cushions in the first weeks of their marriage. He remembered that, then, she used to sit there and sing and sew.

She seemed quite lifeless, at first, but Jim kept his head, and presently, she drew a breath and looked about. She knew Jim, and rested her head tiredly against him as she used to do at first.

When she got better she took her head away.

"Been—here—a long—time—haven't I?" she asked.

"How long?" asked Jim.

"It was Monday—"

"My God," said Jim, "then that was your light on Monday night!"

She nodded.

"What is it now?"

"Thursday."

"Four days," she counted on her fingers. "Is that all? I thought I'd just run in—like you said—and see how you were getting along. I was so cold—so very, very cold! And so hungry! I thought you might have some fire—and some—food. But—you were gone—not waiting. And so—I about died."

Jim tore out the wainscoting, and put it into the stove.

She felt the heat. "Oh, that is good—good!" she said, stretching out unsteadily toward it.

"I had no place to go, Jim—no place on earth. Let me stay until this shivering stops. And give me a little food. Then I will go. I know there is someone else. I saw you and her. That told me that I loved you. There are places for such as I. But not when one is so thin and sick and cold. At those places one must be gay. Very gay! One can paint out the whiteness, but not the shiver."

While she was dizzily saying this, Jim carried her up the stairs and to the bed, where the covers were turned down as she had left them. He handled her lovingly, touching, reverently, the things which had touched her—the bedraggled spangles—the high-heeled satin shoes—the silken stockings—the wonderful laces—putting upon her, at last, some of the humble clothing for the night, she had left behind. There was great splendor in this for Jim—the first time he had been so near his wife. He drew the cheap coverings over her and tucked them about the bare shoulders and waited until she breathed of sleep. Then he turned the light low and went out.

So she slept, and woke to the grateful warmth of fire and the smell of food. No waking that she remembered had been so sweet as that—nor no rest.

Jim was waiting—listening, below, and, almost with her first movement, he was at her side with food. He lifted her head in one hand and fed her with the other. They said nothing—only smiled now and then.

VI—UP TO GOD

Then, again, she slept, very sweetly, so that it was quite morning when she woke. Jim was still there.

"Have you been here all night?"

Jim nodded.

"Must I go now?"

"No," said Jim.

"I may stay a little longer?"

"Yes."

"Always?"

"Yes—if—"

Jim choked dismally. He turned and looked toward those other windows.

"Jim," said his wife, "you understand—now?"

"Yes," choked Jim. "She—the girl you saw me with—made me to understand."

"And you still want *me*?"

"*She* sent me to you."

After she had slept again, Jim opened the blinds to let in the much-needed sunshine. The light showed the piteous ravages the year had made in her beauty. And she, woman-like, read his eyes.

"Yes," she said, "I have lost that. I'll tell you how I've lived. Then you'll understand."

"Don't!" said Jim. "What's the use? You need help. I'm helping you. That's all."

"But one thing you must know *now*. I was deserted—that is why I came back. Not repentance."

There was a silence. Then the woman cried out:

"Oh, Jim, why did you let me go? Why didn't you knock me down—kill me? A woman needs that when she's going wrong!"

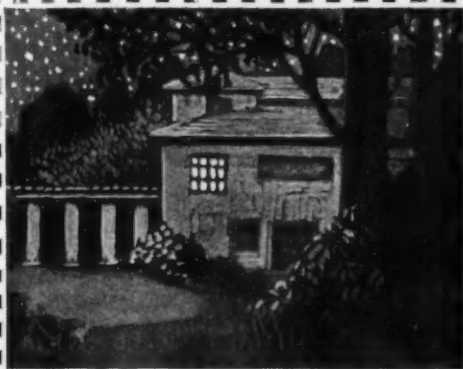
"Then you'd be dead," said Jim, softly. "Once, when I was little, I caught a robin—a little red-breasted thing, and put him in a cage I made, and hung him in the window where I worked, thinking he'd sing for me. But he never did. I had made him sorry—not happy. We didn't understand. He was a bird—I was a boy. For, the other birds would come and tell him things—the sunshine I was keeping him from—the worms and the flying—I suppose. So I opened his cage and said, 'Go.' He wouldn't move. I put in my finger and pushed him off the perch. He fell. He couldn't use his wings. He died. And the other birds came and chattered at me. That taught me a lesson—about letting things go which want to go."

"You don't think it too late for me?"

"No," said Jim. "She says not."

"You haven't tried pushing me off my perch."

"I expect," said Jim, "that I was about ready to be mean, when that little girl you saw me with came in



and read me something out of the Bible. 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' Well, it's hard to believe. Hard! But I guess our God can work that or He wouldn't have said it. And, if He can do it for others, He'll do it for you. For you're prettier than any other woman He ever made—or were. If you aint white no more, like He made you, He'll make you so, if He thinks He ought—and He ought. If He thinks it's all right—why, it's all right, and I got no kick coming. It's up to God."

"Our God! How beautiful that sounds! And I've got to thank someone else for it!"

"Yes!" confessed Jim. "I didn't know. And, when I did know—I couldn't have touched you—till she—much less forgive you. She's praying for us now."

"Look here," said his wife, turning Jim's face to her, "you've taken me back—that's all right. But you don't mean that you forgive me, too?"

"I forgive you," said Jim, "and if you go again and come back, I'll forgive you again. She says I got to do it seventy-seven times. It's only two."

"I wouldn't exchange what you have given me back for heaven itself!" said Jim's wife. "I'll keep it now! I'll make you love me—if she can."

"You'll stay with me always, now?"

"Yes," said his wife. "And—I'll be true—true—so help me God! You—wanted to kiss me—and I wouldn't let you—when I went."

"Yes," said Jim, stooping toward her lips, dutifully.

But she withheld him.

"Every man who wanted to—"

Jim pursued his way to her lips, at last finding them.

Then there was a long silence. Jim had not been certain. But, in that silence he became so. For her sake, hers who prayed. So, he said:

"You *are* white as snow. Because she's over there praying, God has done his miracle right now!"

A light appeared in the window of the little house across the way. One could see a girl in a ghostly garment and with a white face, holding a candle above her head.

"Who is that?" asked Jim's wife.

"Come!" said Jim. "That's her."

He, too, lighted a candle and led his wife to the window, in her bed garments and flowing hair, and held the light above her. The two women looked at each other—for the first—the last time.

"She was praying for us," said Jim. "She is now. You can see that."

"Jim! Are you sure?"

"She is," said Jim, hoarsely.

"Jim—she's—she's an angel!"

"Yes," said Jim.

Thus they stood until the horror and sorrow went out of each woman's face and each piteously smiled. For, each was wondering why she who had not sinned must pay. And Jim was, too. He remembered what she had said—that God had a reason for it. This he could not find. Can you?

The little light across the way flickered and went slowly out, and all was dark. In the other window Jim blew upon the light until it ceased, then led his wife, sobbing, away.

"Oh, Jim!—if you can have her—why do you want me?"

"I do not—understand—" confessed dull Jim, for the first time.





Si Bee's Circumstantial Whiskers

by Barton
Wood
Currie

Illustrations by Horace Taylor

ONE sparkling day in June, Silas Bee dropped gently down beside the privet-hedge that bordered the little vegetable garden of Gideon Bull. He selected a mossy spot in the gradual slope that slanted to the timber-fringed shores of Oneida Lake. Removing his alpaca jacket he neatly folded it for a pillow, combed his beard out several times with his long, smooth fingers, so that it stretched fanwise from his chin in a silky waterfall, pursed his handsome lips in a smile of infant innocence, and slumbered.

This much we know. There is ample direct-evidence to establish that Silas Bee slept beside Gideon Bull's hedge. Caleb Jones, the elder, better known as Jones, Sr., saw him sleeping there. Peter Scales, widely suspected of fish piracy, and an individual without standing in the village, corroborated the testimony of the venerable head of the Jones clan, and as Caleb Jones was walking with Peter Scales at the time and reaffirmed the corroborative evidence of Scales no doubt was cast on the fish-pirate's testimony.

But it was after Jones, Sr., and Scales had passed the hedge that the thrilling act which forms the backbone of this chronicle occurred.

Daniel Dingle and his wife, Hannah

Dingle, approached the hedge from the westward, walking along the stony beach of the lake.

Both the Dingles saw a hand reach out through the interstices of Gideon Bull's hedge and cautiously lift Silas Bee's beard. Then there was a flash of some bright metallic object and hand and beard vanished.

Myra and Sally Bee, sobbing as if their hearts were breaking, crept 'round to the home of Justice of the Peace Jedediah Worme, at dusk, and laid the tragic facts before him. The Dingles had awakened Silas Bee and supported him to his cottage near by. The moment he had realized his bereavement and felt the lacerated bristles on the point of his chin he had crumpled as if from a blow. He had become dazed and incoherent. Covering his denuded countenance with his hands he had implored the Dingles to assist him.

"Poor paw is crushed to a pul-l-l-l-l-l-ulp," sobbed Myra Bee. "He can't talk. Jes' flutters his hands an' moans."

"Who done it?" asked the Justice of the Peace grimly.

"There's on'y one man in ther village who'd have ther spite fer it," burst out Sally Bee, drying her eyes, "an' it was done right a-side his hedge. It was done with clippers, Cousin Jed, an' you reker-



He had become dazed and incoherent

lect when that old snake bought them hedge-clippers often ther Swede peddler."

"Gideon Bull, hey!" sniffed Justice Worme. "Wal, I jes' been waitin' to soak it to that ol' hyper-cryte. He's been reflectin' sarcastic on your paw's whiskers ever since he come to ther village, seein' as his own chin can't raise nothin' 'cept bush-snappers. He's ther man undoubted, so you girls run up to Constable Rufe Picket's house an' tell him I'll have a warrant fer him in ther mornin'."

Deep into the night Jedediah Worme worked on the draft of a warrant that would fit the crime he was certain Gideon Bull had committed. A storm of anger gathered within his breast as he vainly poured over the pages of "The Homemade Lawyer." There was absolutely nothing in the pesky book on beards or whiskers. There were pages on *assault*, *larceny* and *robbery*, but pages totally barren of any light on the case in point. His lamp was flickering low when finally his eye fell upon a phrase that roused him.

"Larceny from the person!" he ejaculated, while trembling fingers wrote the

magic sentence into the blank warrant.

But when Constable Picket went forth with the warrant next morning he learned that Gideon Bull had set out at dawn across the lake, intending to row to South Bay and thence drive to his daughter's home in Syracuse.

"I'll travel to Syracuse an' nab him, Jedge," volunteered the Finville police force, "if the village 'll advance ther fees."

Picket was informed that Finville would commit no such extravagance. Gideon Bull would surely return, when the constable could do his duty. Meantime, Justice Worme could hold a preliminary examination of witnesses.

"We'll sorter mark time fer him," said Jedediah Worme, with an ominous grin.

The warrant was served the moment the alleged culprit alighted from the up milk-train, almost seven days to the second since the perpetration of the larceny from the person of Silas Bee. Vastly to the amazement of the few villagers assembled on the little station platform, the spry old gentleman read the warrant

with evident amusement, then jerked his thumb over his shoulder and said with provoking blandness:

"My ly-er, Walt Hawkins, come down with me from Syracuse. He's gettin' his port-man-ter out o' the baggage car, Picket. Is Judge Worme settin' ter-day?"

"He is," replied the constable, circling cautiously 'round his prisoner, "an' he's been settin' every day this week, a-wait-in' fer you. Ther witnesses ag'in you are trained partikeler. You might as well throw up your hands, Gideon Bull. If you plead 'guilty,' Jedge Worme'll let you off with a high fine."

"I reckon Walt Hawkins 'll do all ther pleadin' that'll be did," retorted the old man. "How erbout that, Walt?" he added, turning toward the young Syracuse attorney, who had stopped on the station platform to shake hands with the station-agent.

The lawyer turned quickly, his ruddy freckled face lighting with a beaming smile.

"Hello, Picket," he cried. "How goes the mighty machinery of the law? Have-

n't seen you since the case against Daniel Dingle, Picket. How's Daniel? How's Judge Worme? How's everybody? Mrs. Picket well? How're the twins? Mare get over the glanders?"

"Jedge Worme's waitin' court in this case," snapped Picket, with a glance of supreme disapproval at the dandified young man. "Guess he wont be none too horrible glad to see you," the constable sniffed. "He was intendin' to appoint Deacon Howler as ther pris'ner's ly-er in case he didn't plead 'guilty' on the facts."

"How's that?" laughed young Hawkins. "Appoint Deacon Howler? Why, he and Silas Bee are first cousins. That's a rich one. Why, Mr. Bull, they had you hanged, drawn and quartered in advance."

"Reckon so," chuckled the wiry little old man, his gray eyes snapping with mirth. "You'd think Si Bee's whiskers was wuth more'n the treasures o' Araby. But when Finville catches Gideon Bull asleep, it'll be on ther seventh Friday o' ther month. I aint been tradin' hosses in this here county forty-odd years with



Picket conducted the prisoner and his counsel up the cellar steps

the blinders down. Come on, Walt, let's face ther music, fer it sounds as if Jed Worme were chippin' ther bench o' ther Finville tree-bu-nal to smithereens. Lead ther way, officer," with a deep salaam to the glowering constable.

As usual, the way to the fount of Finville justice led through the cellar under the post-office and thence up a flight of perpendicular steps to a stuffy, little room, dense with humanity. Of course, Justice Worme still maintained the dignity of the "ermine" by preserving inviolate from the common herd his private rear-entrance on the ground level.

And the magistrate was in no gentle mood. Gideon Bull had written home that he would return on the milk-train that day, but had failed to predict that the train would be two hours late. For two mortal hours Jedediah Worme had squirmed and bobbed about on his cane-bottom chair like an empty jug on the breast of an angry sea. The lightnings of his wrath had smitten every corner of the room, producing a silence so intense among the little jam of villagers that they one and all wore expressions of suffocation when Constable Picket conducted the prisoner and his counsel up the cellar steps. A gasping sigh of relief greeted the arrivals, a sigh that checked itself automatically when Justice Worme was seen to rise half out of his chair and level a threatening finger at Walter Hawkins.

"If you're buttin' inter this case, Walt Hawkins," he cried with shrill heat, "fer ther purpose o' tanglin' up ther law o' ther land an' disconstruin' ther stat-chute, as yer done in ther Jones Ham Case, you better hustle back to Syracuse faster'n you know how.

"Ther evidence ag'in Gideon Bull," pursued the Court with increasing passion, "is battened down tighter'n a stove lid. He's convicted surer'n shootin' stars an' sky rockets an' all ther ly-yers in an' outer Syracuse, Rochester, Oswego an' Oneida wont fetch him loose.

"But outer consider-e-ration o' his age an' id-yucy, I'll on'y fine him ther limit fer tort an' tres-pass ef he'll step up like a man an' confess he stole Si Bee's beard offen his chin with a pair o' hedge-clip-

pers. Do—you—confess—ter it?" thundered the magistrate, sinking back into his chair, purple and breathless.

"The defendant pleads *not* guilty," returned young Hawkins briskly, throwing back the lapels of his coat and inserting his thumbs in the arm-holes of his waistcoat.

"The defendant," he went on, looking straight into the eyes of the raging Finville jurist, "is *presumed* to be innocent until proven guilty. Finville is not a Russian star-chamber, Judge Worme, nor ever will be while a man of your high intelligence presides upon the bench. The Constitution of the United States of America provides that no man, woman or child shall be punished for any alleged offense against the laws of the land without due process of law, free and above board, and in open tribunal. The judge or magistrate who violates that cardinal principle of this glorious free government of ours, does so at his peril."

While the little court-room rang with a spontaneous burst of applause in which all but the immediate members of the Bee family joined, a grayish pallor spread over the weather-browned and wrinkled visage of Justice Worme. Blinking his eyes savagely, he made a few feeble passes in the air with his gavel, then burst out tremulously:

"I give ther pris'ner his ch'ice ter plead accordin' as it's writ an' printed in ther Declaration o' Independence an' Constitution o' ther United States. Si Bee, take ther witness stand an' make yer allegations ag'in ther accused pris'ner at ther bar. Rekerlect you air under oath, accordin' to stat-chute an' Conster-tution, an' take yer hand offen yer chin, so as the crime what was committed on you shows free and above board in ther open daylight an' sight o' man."

Gradually the little magistrate had worked himself up to a pitch of savage sarcasm. His closely-cropped beard bristled and his sparse pompadour stood erect as nails.

Silas Bee's delicate white skin crimsoned with blushes as he sank into the witness chair and bared to the curious gaze of all adult Finville a countenance

gone woefully desolate of familiar noble lineaments. In the absence of the celebrated beard his meagerly tufted chin seemed struggling to retreat and merge in his Adam's apple. His full, wide-nos-triled nose seemed a lumpy formless knob, where before it had filled in the perspective with almost heroic effect, a boldly chiseled monument, looming grandly above a wilderness of beard. Miranda Ann Bee, the hapless complainant's wife, burst into tears and smothered her sobs in her apron as her husband reluctantly lowered his hand, and turned timidly toward the magistrate.

"Tell ther Court, Si," opened Justice Worme with a vicious glance at the twitching features of the defendant, "ef you had ther full length an' growth o' your beard on your chin when you went to sleep a-side o' Gideon Bull's hedge."

"It were all thar, Jed," moaned Mr. Bee with a dismal shake of his head.

"Sally an' Myra had on'y finished combin' it 'fore I went out."

"An' was that thar beard complete an' in-tire when you woke up?" demanded the magistrate with fierce emphasis.

The witness gulped several times, opened his mouth in a pathetic effort to reply, failed, and nodded a doleful negative.

"It were snipped off sharp to your chin? Speak up, Si," growled Justice Worme, "ther hull machinery o' ther law is backin' you up."

"I-i-i-i-t-w-w-w-w-ere cut off total," stuttered the witness, while his hand involuntarily shot up to his chin and shielded it.

"What did you consider them whiskers wuth?" asked the Court with a crafty light in his eyes.

Silas Bee's brow broke out in a beady sweat, and after a moment of imminent strangulation, he managed to moan:



They had both taken a hand at combing it after breakfast

"Money couldn't a-bought 'em offen me."

"Would you a-sold 'em for five hundred dollars?" pursued Justice Worme, with one eye on the witness and the other on the expressionless face of young Hawkins.

"Not fer a million!" cried the complainant, shaking his fist in the air with an unprecedented display of temper.

"In view o' which," volleyed the Court, "ther snippin' o' that beard offen your chin were the same as ther larceny o' one million dollar offen your person?"

"Make it two million," fired back Silas Bee, gritting his teeth.

"You said *one* million, Si," corrected the magistrate sharply, "an' you gotter stick to that figger. You'll swear on that figger, wont you?"

"Yes," faintly responded the witness, collapsing into his characteristic meekness.

"Cross-examine ther witness," cried Justice Worme then, thrusting out his gavel toward young Hawkins. "I reckon," he added viciously, "yer wont try an' reduce this here case ter petty larceny, like yer done in ther Jones Ham Case."

"If your honor will permit," spoke up Gideon Bull's counsel gently, "I will reserve my examination of Mr. Bee until after I have heard more of the testimony for the prosecution."

Justice Worme's little eyes sparkled with triumph.

"I reckon you aint ekal to cross-firin' at this witness yet-a-while," drawled the magistrate, "an' by ther time you've heard ther corroboratin' everdence I calkerlate you wont be a dinged sight more fitten fer it. Caleb Jones, step up to ther chair an' take ther oath."

The octogenarian senior of all the Finville Joneses obeyed with an alacrity that almost overturned the bench on which the complainant's witnesses were assembled.

"Yes, I seen him sleepin' thar by ther hedge, an'—" exploded Jones, Sr., while still in the act of dropping into the witness chair. He stopped as if he had been miraculously corked at the sharp report of the Court's gavel.

"Caleb Jones," threatened the justice in a voice of thunder, "I'll fine you a dollar fer contempt o' court fer speakin' till you're spoke at. This here is a tree-bu-nal o' law an' justice."

"I oughter know what's comin'," grumbled the old man. "You been shootin' ther questions at me twict a day fer six days."

"You don't know nothin' till ther question's put proper an' accordin' ter law," yelled the magistrate. "Ther question I'm askin' is, ter wit:

"On ther second day o' June, at 10:42, exact by ther dollar watch you won at ther King's Daughters' raffle, did you walk by ther hedge back o' Gideon Bull's yard?"

"I did," snapped the witness. "Pete Scales was 'longside o' me at ther time. He—"

Bang! impinged the judicial gavel.

"Answer ther language o' ther Court's in-qui-rees in 'yesses' an' 'noses,' Caleb Jones," shrilled Justice Worme, "an' cut out Pete Scales till he's made ter figger."

"I went by the hedge, *yes*. I was walkin' slow, *yes*," shot back the witness angrily.

"An' Silas Bee, ther complainant what has jes' testerfied, was sleepin' a-side that hedge?"

"He were, yes, an'—"

Again the gavel crashed in terrifying punctuation.

"An' you seen his beard?"

"I seen them pink whiskers plain as—"

"You can swear they was the same an' usual whiskers he allus wore?"

"Never seen but the same beard onto him."

"An' as you went by the hedge you seen Gideon Bull in his yard?"

So manifestly pleased with himself was the Finville jurist that his usual raucous tones had dwindled to a purring rumble.

"I seen Gideon Bull bendin' over a cucumber vine jes' inside his hedge," shrilled Jones, Sr. "I reckernized him by his blue galluses an' ther brown patch on his overalls."

The magistrate jerked round in his chair to confront young Hawkins.



Old Hiram Bee laughed himself into a "stroke"

"Wanter cross-examine the second witness?" he asked shortly, closing one eye.

"Thank you, yes," answered the defendant's attorney. Then, addressing the witness:

"How did you know Silas Bee was asleep when you saw him lying beside the hedge?"

"Wal, he didn't lay down thar for no excitement, did he?" challenged the old man.

"Kindly answer my question," demanded Hawkins. "*How* did you know he was asleep?"

"'Cause he allus sleeps when he lies down. Si Bee kin sleep standin', too. I seen him a-sleep onct watchin' a ball game." Caleb Jones sat back with a snap, confident that he had crushed his youthful interlocutor.

"You mean, I take it," smiled Lawyer Hawkins, "that you *guessed* Mr. Bee was asleep."

"An' I guessed right, I reckon," chuckled the witness.

"That is all, Mr. Jones."

"Pete Scales to ther witness chair," shouted the Court, pointing a trembling finger at the fish pirate who had been

solemnly regarding the proceedings out of one screwed-up little eye that gleamed like a tiny beacon from amid the dense growth of tawny beard that covered his face.

The witness crossed his legs jauntily and twiddled his thumbs when he had comfortably ensconced himself in the chair that faced the scowling magistrate.

"You heard ther everdence o' Caleb Jones, Pete Scales?" barked Justice Worme, unable to conceal his dislike for the complacent village outlaw.

"Sure did," returned the fish pirate, suavely. "Could a-heerd that voice o' his up to ther hatchery."

The Court's scowl darkened and he poised his gavel.

"You an' Caleb Jones passed ther Bull hedge, walkin' side by side, at 10:42 o'clock on ther mornin' o' June 2nd?"

"Yep. Passed it at a middlin' good clip. We was out arter frogs, Caleb an' me."

"An' you seen Silas Bee a-sleepin' on ther ground a-side ther hedge?"

"Wal, ef it warn't Si Bee, it war a mighty keen likeness o' him."

"You seen his beard?"

"Didn't pay no partikeler notice ez to

that, Jedge. That beard o' his'n usual went round with him. I reckoned at ther time he'd brought it erlong."

"Aint it a fact," cried the magistrate, "that you said sunthin' to Caleb Jones about Silas Bee's beard when you seen him lyin' thar?"

The fish pirate's mouth cracked wide open in a boyish smile.

"Key-rect, Jedge," he snickered. "I says to Caleb Jones, says I, 'Caleb, ef Si Bee could grow garden truck like he grows that beard o' his'n, he'd bust ther vegertable market higher'n a kite an'—'"

"Your answer's in, Pete Scales," Justice Worme cut him short. "Git down offen ther stand, less'n Walt Hawkins wants a turn at catechisin' you."

"No questions, may it please your honor," said the young man with easy nonchalance.

The magistrate uttered a sound as near the equivalent of a chuckle as he had ever been guilty of. In rapid succession he called and questioned Myra Bee and Sally Bee. The burden of their testimony was that when their parent left the Bee cottage on the morning of June 2nd, his beard had fluttered from his chin with its customary grace and elegance. That it was firmly attached thereto the Misses Bee were confident of beyond peradventure of doubt. They had both taken a hand at combing it after breakfast. As long as they could remember, this had been their pleasant duty.

Walter Hawkins declined to cross-examine Myra and Sally Bee, murmuring, as he stroked his little red mustache:

"The veracity of the Misses Bee is unimpeachable. Furthermore, it is not the contention of the defense that the complainant did not wear his beard when he left home."

"It aint, hey?" sneered Justice Worme. "Wal, that aint no news to me. I reckon you think we're goin' to slip up on ther motive; thought when we got our case in again Gideon Bull, you'd make one o' them fancy arguments, settin' up that no motive fer ther crime had been allegated. But it wont do you a shuck o' good. Jemima Pebbles, take ther stand."

Jemima Pebbles rose from the witness' bench as if a powerful spring had sud-

denly been set off under her. She proceeded to the witness chair on a swift trot and planked herself into it as if under some apprehension that the chair desired to thwart her purpose.

Miss Pebbles was what might be termed a mature spinster. She was short and sharp. She had been short and sharp ever since Jones, Sr., could remember. Her chin was sharp. Her nose was sharper. She had a shrill, cutting voice, a sharp line for a mouth, and little dark eyes, sharp as Toledo steel.

"Wal!" she snapped as she sat down. Justice Worme ducked as if from a wasp. But he came back with vigor and set teeth.

"Did you ever hear ther pris'n'r, Gideon Bull, say he'd like to chop off Silas Bee's beard?"

"Not in them words," returned Miss Pebbles, in a voice that cut the cobwebs on the ceiling to ribbons. "What I heerd him say was: that he'd give a pair o' mules ter see Si Bee's face in ther open. It were on the milk-train goin' down to Bernhard's Bay, an' he was talkin' to 'Gene Hall, o' Rochester, whose folks was summerin' here. He says to 'Gene Hall, he says:

"'Man an' boy, I've knowed Si Bee forty year, but in all them years I never seen his chin. I'd give a pair o' mules to see if he's got one.' Them's ther words he spoke, exact an' partikeler."

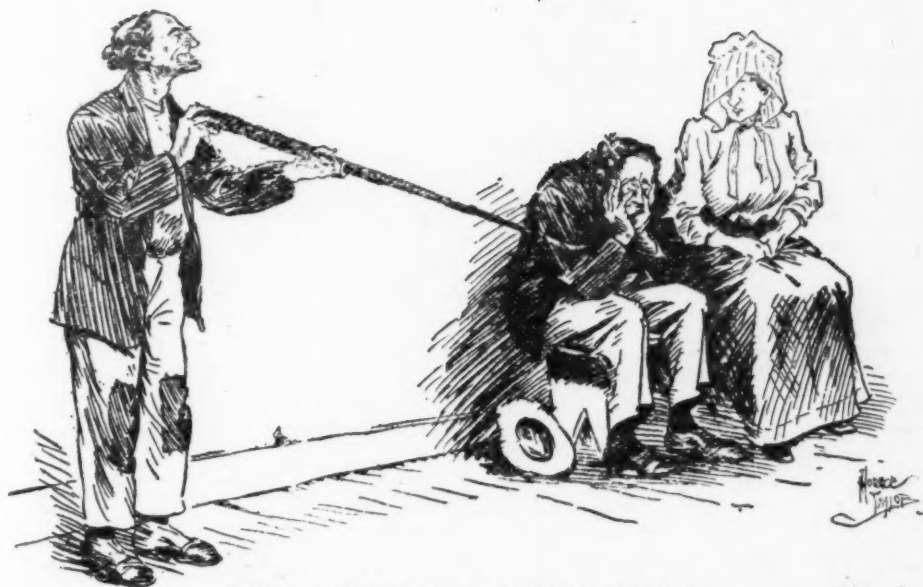
"Have you got any cross-examinin' as to this witness?" demanded Justice Worme, whirling round on the young attorney.

"Just one question," answered the lawyer. "Did the witness ever hear of Mr. Bull giving two mules to anyone?"

Miss Pebbles snapped her chin twice, so that it almost met the point of her nose.

"I aint never heard o' him givin' nothin' ter nobody. He's a hoss-trader, aint he?"

All the Bees save Silas laughed aloud. Old Hiram Bee laughed himself into a "stroke," and had to be pounded violently on the back. Sarah Bee's twins grew so hilarious that Bailiff Jim Beebe removed them to the cellar and slammed down the hatch. Silas, the sole exception, com-



Baliff Jim Beebe had to prod the complainant with his staff

ported himself with sad decorum, nor did the light of happiness leap into his eyes when Justice Worme, strangely ignoring the commotion in his courtroom, executed a triumphal wink and nodded.

So chipper was the usually grim and forbidding jurist that when he summoned Daniel Dingle to the stand, he actually smiled upon him and asked gruffly: "Dan'l Dingle, Jr., get over the colic, Dan'l?"

However, before the pale-eyed Mr. Dingle could reply as to the health of his first-born, the Court had returned to the stern business before him with his customary incisiveness.

"Dan'l Dingle," he began, "did you see ther total an' in-tire beard o' Silas Bee snipped offen his chin while he lay a-side o' Gideon Bull's hedge?"

"I saw ther same," responded the little witness importantly. "Hannah an' I had jes' come in from ther lake an' was walkin' along ther shore, back o' Gideon Bull's garden. Hannah was lookin' up ther field an' sees what she thinks is ther tail on a fox wavin' in ther wind a-side o' Bull's hedge.

"Dan'l," Hannah whispers to me, 'thar's a fox in ther timerthy a-side o' ther Bull's hedge. I see his tail.'

"An' jes' at that thar moment, Jedge Worme, a hand reaches out o' ther hedge with somethin' glintin' in it. Thar's a flash an' a flicker, an' then another hand whips out an' grabs what Hannah suspected was a fox's tail.

"We stood thar stuperfixed, Jedge, a-waitin' fer ther fox to cry out. It was awful an' total still. A bumble bee flew by, buzzin' like a saw. A heron hollered back o' Baker's P'int. Then Hannah says to me, 'Dan'l, go up cautious an' see if ther fox is dead.'

"I went up ther field, cautious as a snake, Jedge, an' thar in ther grass I looks down on Si Bee. He was plumb a-sleep an' his beard was gone to an inch o' his chin. I calls out—"

"That's ernuff, Dan'l," interrupted the Court. "This here case is on'y dealin' with ther larceny offen ther person of Silas Bee's beard. I guess ther ly-yer fer ther defense wont tamper with that everdence o' yours, seein' as you got Hannah Dingle to back you up."

"No questions," said young Hawkins, softly.

Mrs. Dingle's testimony was a simple corroboration of her husband's narrative, with a few additional remarks concerning the grief and anguish of Silas Bee

when he awoke to a realization of his desecrated chin. When Mrs. Dingle had left the stand Justice Worme poised his elbows on the bench and addressed Gideon Bull's counsel.

"Ther everdence ag'in ther pris'ner is in, an' it appears ter me that he's guiltier'n a hawk. It's been proved that he had a spite ag'in Silas Bee's whiskers. It's been proved he was inside his hedge when Silas Bee's beard was snipped. It's been proved Silas Bee esterminated them whiskers o' his at one million dollar, makin' it grand larceny sure'n hen's feathers. Are you willin' now to plead convicted on ther facts an' leave ther fate o' your client to ther mercy o' ther Court, which wont be much?"

"No," replied the young lawyer gently, picking up from the bench the little pad on which he had been making cursory notes. "Strong as the case against the defendant may appear to your honor, there are one or two vital points that have not been covered. *Where is Exhibit A?*"

"Where is which?" snarled the magistrate, bracing himself for a conflict.

"Where," continued the young man, daintily raising his pencil between thumb and forefinger, "is the alleged object of the alleged larceny?—the complainant's beard, I mean."

Justice Worme's little gooseberry eyes fairly bulged. In a choking voice he burst out:

"Ask that o' Gideon Bull!"

Walter Hawkins smiled indulgently.

"Inasmuch, your honor," he ran on, "as my client has pleaded 'not guilty,' he must be presumed innocent of any knowledge of the fate or whereabouts of Mr. Bee's beard until the contrary is established."

The Court rose up in all the majesty of his wrath and proclaimed: "Aint it been proved that them whiskers was total an' in-tire when Si Bee lied down a-side o' Gideon Bull's hedge, an' aint Dan'l Dingle an' Hannah Dingle swore to the grand larceny o' them identical whiskers?"

"Such evidence, your honor," pursued the young man, tapping his little pad with his pencil, "is purely circum-

stantial. Am I to understand that the case against my client is based purely upon, ahem!—to use your own expression—*circumstantial whiskers?*"

Justice Worme slumped back in his chair with one hand dragging across the cover of "The Homemade Lawyer." Suddenly his eye fell upon the ponderous great tome, and he seized it as a drowning man grasps a floating spar. Slamming the book open, he pounded it with his fist and exclaimed:

"Circumficial everdence, accordin' as it's writ in this here book o' law an' learnin', is good, sufficient an' convictin' everdence. It is, by ding! an' it goes in this court o' mine stronger'n a team o' mules."

"Very true, your honor," assented Attorney Hawkins, bowing humbly. "Circumstantial evidence is very good in its place, providing that it establishes the fact or crime alleged, beyond a scintilla of doubt. Circumstantial evidence, however, is only admissible where it is impossible to procure direct evidence. Very well, then: Was any effort made to obtain and produce in court the complainant's alleged stolen beard? Did Constable Picket make any effort to secure this highly important evidence? You recall how derelict he was in the Jones Ham Case. He failed to recover the ham."

Jedediah Worme flung himself 'round and confronted the bewildered and gaping constable.

"Rufe Picket," he asked hoarsely, "how erbout that?"

"Don't know nothin' on it," Picket replied, with a sullen scowl. "When Gideon Bull lit out, I reckoned he took them whiskers with him."

"On what did you base that supposition, Mr. Picket?" asked the lawyer.

"I aint said nothin' erbout superstition," replied Picket, truculently. "'Twas a common-sense surspicion."

"Common-sense, Mr. Picket," reproved the young lawyer, "is usually based on evidential fact."

"It is regrettable" (with a sympathetic nod to the Court) "that your honor should be annoyed by such incompetence," Hawkins went on. "However, we will have to make the best of the constable's neg-

ligence; so, if your honor will permit, I will now conduct my delayed cross-examination of the complainant."

Justice Worme allowed his burning glances to wander from the constable to the lawyer and back again to the constable, where they rested a moment with fierce intensity. The uneasy squirming of Silas Bee recalled to mind the lawyer's request.

"Silas Bee, take ther stand," shouted the magistrate, with a vigor that seemed to paralyze the person addressed. Bailiff Jim Beebe had to prod the complainant with his staff before he rose to the summons and struggled to the witness chair.

"Mr. Bee," began young Hawkins, referring solemnly to his little pad, "you have testified that you valued your beard at one million dollars?"

"Y-y-y-es," answered the witness, faintly.

"Were you ever offered any such sum for your beard?"

"N-n-n-n-no. N-n-n-n-not in partikeler."

"As a matter of fact, were you ever offered so much as one dollar for your beard?"

"N-n-n-n-ot ez I kin reckerlect."

"Have you offered so much as one dollar in reward for the return of your lost beard?"

"'Twarnt lost," kindled the witness, "it war—"

"Answer my question," cut in the attorney, threateningly. "Have you offered a penny in reward for the return of your beard?"

"Certainly I aint," sniffled the witness with growing heat. "What good'd that beard be to me now?"

"Ha!" cried the lawyer, with a dramatic gesture. "You admit then, that your beard is worthless! You volunteer that confession!"

Silas Bee opened his mouth, and it remained open while he gasped for air. When he found his voice it shook with passion.

"I reckon I said what I said," he fenced wildly. "You aint a-goin' to catch me at no perjurin'."

"That is not my intention," said Walter Hawkins, sweetly. "My questions are

simple and uncompromising. Now will you kindly point out to the Court the exact distance from your chin at which your beard was removed."

"It aint possible," protested the witness in a tremulous falsetto. "My beard has growed half-an-inch since it were cut off by that fiend in huming flesh, Gideon Bull."

"Don't lose your temper, Mr. Bee. But tell me: how long was the beard you allege Mr. Bull removed?"

"Three feet, eleven an' one-half inches by ther measure," cried the complainant, indicating the length from his chin with trembling hands.

"How long have you been growing a beard, Mr. Bee?" probed the lawyer in velvety tones.

"Thirty-nine year, seven months."

"You say that it grows at the rate of half-an-inch a week?"

"That's what I said, warnt it?" and anger again flamed high on the pale forehead of the witness.

"Indeed you did," laughed Walter Hawkins, "and I thank you. You have given me just the figures I wanted. If the Court will indulge me a moment, I will work them out."

"Let me see: thirty-nine years and seven months. Ah, yes! approximately two thousand and fifty-six weeks, or, in other words, two thousand and fifty-six inches. Divide by two, and we get ten hundred and twenty-eight inches. Divide again by twelve and we have eighty-five feet and a fraction. Good!"

"Now, Mr. Bee, you said that your late beard was three feet, eleven inches long. I subtract that from eighty-five feet and get a remainder of eighty-one feet, one inch, or more than twenty beards of the same length as the beard you lost."

The young man handed the pad on which he had been figuring to Justice Worme, then turned again upon the witness and said accusingly:

"Mr. Bee, what became of those twenty other beards? Did you value them at one million dollars each? Do you mean to sit here and insult the intelligence of this Court with the declaration that you have squandered \$20,000,000 worth of whis-



"Don't you make another fool sound in this here tree-bu-nal!"

kers in the past thirty-nine years, as you announced in your direct testimony, or are you willing to stand on your latter statement that the beard you allege was feloniously stolen from you is worthless? Don't answer hastily, Mr. Bee, for perjury is a serious crime."

Young Hawkins stepped back to the bench and resumed his deferential pose with an expectant inclination of his head toward Justice Worme. A sepulchral stillness had invaded the court-room. The magistrate's bristling head seemed sinking between his shoulders, his eyes resting in a vacant stare on the limp and crushed Silas Bee. An explosive gurgle from the vicinity of Peter Scales roused the Court from his leaden apathy. Lurching forward, he transfixed the witness with a look of complete and unutterable contempt.

"Don't open them lips o' yourn, Si Bee," rumbled the justice, with gathering ire. "Don't you make another fool

sound in this here tree-bu-nal o' law. Arter all my hammerin' an' drillin' onto your thick skull to induct inter you that you got to set a eck-zact an' partikeler valyer faster'n poison, what've you gone an' done? I'll tell you what you've gone an' done: You've gone an' eaten your own words, chewed 'em to pulp an' swallowed 'em. You've cut down the price o' that beard o' yourn from a million to less'n a dollar, an' then you went an' chucked in twenty more sim'lar sets o' whiskers at ther same discount.

"You aint no fitten man to wear whiskers, Si Bee," concluded the magistrate, volcanically. "You aint fitten to wear even circumficial whiskers an' ther judgment o' this Court is that ef Gideon Bull committed ther larceny of a beard offen you, it warnt no larceny; it warnt no tort nor trespass, but a act o' Providence upon the ding-blastedest ol' addlepate that ever wore chin-flickers. Court is a-jined *siney die*."

The Crack of Doom

BY PERCY WHITE

NOT since the declaration of war with Germany had there been such a fury of excitement in New York. The world was standing on tiptoe. Men spoke in whispers or yells. Factories had shut down. Stores were closed. The police force was paralyzed. Railroads, telegraphs, mails were out of commission. Murderers, thieves, and vandals swarmed

the city. Pillage and loot reigned. The air was red with war.

Newspapers were running spasmodically. Reports of the German fleet, bearing down upon the city from the Southern Atlantic, had stirred New York to riot and frenzy. Thousands were beginning to throng westward, foreseeing invasion. The nation feared that Admiral

Barton's fleet, which had been sent to intercept the Germans, and was now laboring south of Bermuda, had been wrecked in the typhoon caused by the earthquake which had just demolished Havana. For three days no wireless communication had been held with it.

Even more alarming were stories of the *Walkure*, an enormous German dirigible of the Zeppelin pattern, which was said to have been seen hovering above Washington, and about to annihilate the whole city by means of its deadly explosives.

The government at Washington was chaotic. The hesitation of the President, the dawdling of Congress, the torpor of Stackpole, secretary of the navy, as the crisis of war approached, had thrust the country to the very verge of anarchy.

With foreign powers the situation was no less precarious. England's implication threatened to draw all Europe into the turmoil. And still the government seemed powerless to act.

Lieutenant Rufus Barry, of the Signal Service, paced to and fro along the ramparts of Fort Tompkins. From one end of his line of march he could view the smoke of the city, the Bartholdi Statue, and the battleship *Utah*, relegated to the coast defense, dozing at anchor out in the stream. Occasionally he would jerk his field-glass from his belt, tip his cap over his shaggy eyebrows, and glower at a revenue cutter which was snuggling close under the lee of the battleship.

Then, whirling about, he would resume his caged-lion promenade, pausing at the other end of his beat to gaze at a mob surging around the aërodrome beyond the fort, where soldiers with fixed bayonets were having difficulty in holding them off.

Suddenly an officer ran out from the guard house and saluted him.

"More trouble at the aërodrome?" The lieutenant put his question anxiously.

"Yes, sir," answered the younger officer, his genial face scowling. "The crowd is crazy. They're bound to break in. They want to take everything into their own hands. They're damning the President and the whole shebang at Washington. Somehow, they've got wind

of the *Sheldrake*, and they're bound to send you out. But here's a telegram. I just got it over the wire myself."

"From Washington?" snatched the lieutenant.

"Yes, but not from the White House. It's—well, it's—"

"It's from her," broke in Barry, grabbing the message. "Good! She wants to see me first."

"Read it," replied the other. "Too bad, old man; but you've got to brace up. The country needs you."

Lieutenant Barry tore open the envelope and read. Then for some time the two walked side by side, neither speaking. The revenue cutter, unheeded now, was steaming toward the fort.

Suddenly the lieutenant stopped and grasped his friend's hand.

"Pete, I ought to have taken your advice, and never have asked her. I might have known she would throw me over when a better man came along. Especially," he added, gritting his teeth unpleasantly, "when the better man happens to be a count."

"Oh, don't be too hard on her," soothed the other, smiling. "Remember, she always told you she cared for him, even when she promised to marry you. It's a hard proposition for her. H'm, if I were the daughter of the Secretary of the Navy, the belle of Washington society, and dead in love with a count, believe even I'd be upset when matters came to this pass. In fact," finished the young officer, fondling his back hair femininely, "I think I, too, should break off with my whole coterie of *fancés*."

"You're a good fellow, Pete, even if you are a madman," said the lieutenant, "and I forgive you."

"Thanks," laughed the other. "But here's the revenue cutter, and they're wigwagging for you. Here's Laurin, too. Don't look at his eyes: look through them. So long!"

A man from the revenue cutter was approaching. He was thin as a pickerel, and had a sharp nose.

"Mr. Laurin," said the lieutenant, saluting.

"Yes, Mr. Laurin, of the Secret Service," returned the new comer, "with a

dispatch for you of great importance."

"Come, then," suggested the lieutenant, with a shrug. "I suppose you know what that crowd's up to."

The pair made their way to the guardhouse, where they were closeted in a small room filled with firearms and smelling of varnish.

"The President of the United States," began the Secret Service man, "appoints you to carry these instructions, which, if you can deliver them within ten hours, will be the means of rescuing the Atlantic squadron, and perhaps of saving the whole United States."

"The newspapers say the squadron's already wrecked," sulked Barry.

"The President received a wireless from Admiral Barton *via* Cape Hatteras this morning."

"Then why doesn't he send his instructions back by wireless?"

"It was impossible. The storm is still raging. The Admiral's own dispatch was broken off in the middle. Here is the packet, which you are to deliver in person to Admiral Barton, on board the flagship *South Dakota*. Is your machine in fighting trim?"

"She's tuned to the minute, and she's been waiting for the President's say-so since the war broke."

"Then you are to start at once," replied the other, suavely. "This packet also contains drawings just received from our agents in Berlin, showing the equipment of the dirigible *Walkure*, built by the foremost man in the Kaiser's service, who is—"

"Who is a thoroughbred scoundrel!" muttered Barry.

"The power of whose dirigible has not been guessed at in New York, in spite of the reports. It is a terrible engine. It can destroy a whole navy or a whole city in a night. Nothing on earth can cope with it. Since the discovery—"

"Did the President tell you to talk this up to me?" scoffed Barry. "Better cut it, if he did, for pretty soon that mob's going to break into the aërodrome, and he'll have to whistle his commands."

"The President, sir," reprimanded the messenger, "has done you the great honor of choosing you for—"

"Great honor, nothing! He knows my aëroplane is the only one which can make the trip, and he knows I'm the only man who can handle her. If you've got anything more to say, say it. Where is Barton's fleet, anyhow?"

The Secret Service man sneered. Two small white spots gleamed above his nostrils, but he spoke with coolness.

"From what observations he was able to take he was in latitude 27° 37', north, longitude 61°, west," he said. "You will remember he left Sandy Hook on the 21st, steaming southeast, approximately, to intercept the German fleet, supposed to be cruising New-York-wards from equatorial waters. The dispatch you are to carry commands him to alter his course, and to head for the Canal."

"The Panama Canal?" asked Barry, with a start. "While the Germans are sailing for New York?"

"The Germans are not sailing for New York. According to Admiral Barton's wireless, they are already well on their way towards the Isthmus. His message implies that he received this news from torpedo boats sent ahead as scouts. Remember that you have less than ten hours to locate the fleet at the point which this paper of instructions specifies. Good luck!"

Barry watched the Secret Service man narrowly as he left the guardhouse and got aboard the revenue cutter, which puffed away. Pete entered and handed him a newspaper, on which, below flaring headlines, were the words:

"Miss Margery Stackpole, daughter of the secretary of the navy, has disappeared. Count Zerstreuen, previously connected with the German embassy, has also been missing from Washington for thirty-six hours."

With a bitter laugh Barry tossed the paper aside, and the two raced over to the aërodrome.

Barry shouted at the guards. The crowd surged back. Both men entered a large shed, in the center of which the water of the harbor was swishing about the nether structure of a giant aëroplane.

Three great tiers of canvas, stretching from end to end of the aërodrome, towered one above another. Trussed to their

framework a fragile, boat-shaped structure was suspended, upon which the machine now rested lightly in the water.

Barry and his comrade rushed up a ladder to the tiny pilot box, just forward of the engines. The sliding doors of the *aërodrome* were opened, and the *Sheldrake* swam buoyantly out into the harbor. Its wings, very long, though seeming scarce a yard in width, and its spreading tail, gave it the appearance of a mighty seabird, alighting for an instant on the crest of a wave. A seething cheer went up from the crowd.

"All right!" jerked Barry.

The other crouched before a fly-wheel, grasped a crank, and gave a supple spring. One of the engines began to purr. The lieutenant adjusted his feet in the pedal controls, twisted the steering column, and threw in the clutch. Both propellers began to revolve slowly, and the great triplane skimmed majestically over the water. The second engine started. Gathering speed, the mighty bird was plunging forward, leaving behind a foamy wake. Then, with a bound, it flew from the shimmering water, and hurtled into the air.

Pete looked back longingly at the Statue of Liberty, waving his oil-can and pronouncing a toast. Lieutenant Barry, sheltered from the knifing wind by the intermediate plane, eyed his binnacle grimly, then looked straight ahead.

The *Sheldrake*, although still ascending, according to the sextant-indicator, was already out of sight of the city. The horizon was ever widening. Yachts and coasting vessels shot out of sight beneath them. The clouds of the summer afternoon began to gather underneath in feathery bunches. The day was wearing to a close.

The rush of the wind, the trill and tremor of the engines, the clamor of the propellers, singing, whirring, churning, had become a dead monotony. The tension, as the hours crawled on, rasped on the nerves of the aviators. At last the two changed places.

"Something queer about that Panama Canal story," commented Pete, as he assumed the wheel, "though it is rather keen of the Dutchmen to send their fleet

through into the Pacific, and clean us up from that coast. It would be all up if they should get a foothold in the West. Still, there's a screw loose somewhere, and I have an idea who it is.' Besides, the fact of Zerstreuen's disappearance looks suspicious, especially when coupled with that of Miss Stackpole."

Barry did not answer, and the men lapsed again into the wrenching silence, feeling a sense of impending tragedy as the end of their weighty mission drew near. Lieutenant Barry, his brain pulsing, turned to work desperately at his engines, though the *aëroplane* was flying at a speed so tremendous that it would have been shattered, even if it had run into a flock of geese.

"Drop her a hundred feet," he ordered, sharply. "The current's better there. Quick, man! We've got thirty minutes, and the fate of the country's in our hands."

Night had fallen. The clouds beneath them had closed into an opaque and billowy mass. Other clouds were gathering about and above them, cloaking the rumble of distant thunder.

Both were drenched with mist. The man at the wheel was quivering from excitement and fatigue. Suddenly Barry uttered a cry, dropped his binoculars, and sprang to the switch. Pete, confused, whirled round. The engines stopped.

As from nowhere, a strange sound came to their ears. The men's hearts stopped, they listened, eyeballs set. The sound grew louder. It was a voice from the air, ringing above the roar of the waters, a woman's voice, stirring and sad, fondling the melody of a plaintive song. It ceased. A great mass, darker and denser than the clouds, swam above them.

Pete collapsed upon the steering wheel. The *aëroplane* lunged sideways, and there came a crash. Barry leaped forward, brushed his body away, and grasped the helm. The triplane, careening downwards, trembled in every spine and stay. At last, sweeping in a mighty arc, it righted slowly.

Far below the clouds now, the rain began to lash its wings pitilessly; while the breakers, dashing heavenward, drenched it all with spray.

"Quick!" yelled Barry.

Pete staggered up, his face bleeding, and groped to the engine platform. The hull of the *aéroplane* was booming against the waves.

"She wont start," he blurted, wrenching at the crank.

"Try the other," came the command.

Pete cringed by the starboard engine, and gave a frantic jerk. The muffler emitted a volley of explosions. Barry moved a lever, the engines whirled again, and the tottering *aéroplane* rose uncertainly.

"It was her voice," murmured Pete, cowering behind the windshield. "In Zerstreuen's dirigible."

"In the *Walkure*?" rasped Barry, with a grim laugh. "Lucky he didn't see us."

"Then it must have been at Washington. It must have taken them both aboard there. What are they doing here?"

Pete drew his head into his oilskin, like a turtle, buckling his skull cap beneath his chin.

"Get out your glasses," directed the lieutenant. "We must be near the fleet."

He struck a match and looked at the chronometer. The *Sheldrake* was again above the clouds, soaring over the very heart of the hurricane. Above, the stars shone bright and the moon smiled; below, was night and chaos. Presently they came to a break in the cloud bank.

"It's a battleship!" cried Pete. "Thank God! It looks like the *Dakota*, but I can't see."

In a moment they were directly above the ship. Barry shut off the engines. The *aéroplane* circled in a descending eagle's spiral. Then came a rip, and a flash from below. A shot had pierced the rigging; another sang past their prow. For an instant the men stared downwards, then "Full speed!" shouted Barry. The engines began to revolve again. More shells shrieked past. Then the *aéroplane* was out of range.

Barry cursed. "Now, I will get him," he said.

"It was the German fleet!" cried the aide, standing on tiptoe and clutching a stay. "But where are you taking us? We must find Barton now. You are heading her for New York!"

"Don't you see the German fleet head-

ing for New York? Didn't you see Zerstreuen heading for New York?"

"They weren't going to the Canal at all," gasped Pete.

"No, Zerstreuen from the *Walkure* sent that wireless the President got this morning."

"Of course," snatched Pete. "He got the naval cipher through Miss Stackpole, who stole it from her father. Zerstreuen wanted to get you out of the way. He knew the *Sheldrake* alone could foil him. He's on his way to annihilate New York. We must catch him!"

"He must be getting out of fuel," observed Barry, calmly.

The *Sheldrake* was out of the storm again soon, and seemed to be flying faster than ever before. Pete on the deck lay in sleep and stupor. Barry sat dogged in his seat, muffled in oilskin, scanning the huge horizon. But the German dirigible was nowhere to be seen.

Hour after hour dragged on. The loathsome tediousness of his work, the never-ending rotation of the fans, the pumping of the engines, would soon become unbearable. Dawn was breaking. All the clouds had dissolved. The sea was still running high and green, flecked with caps of snowy surf, like a field of waving daisies. Off to the westward the Bermudas seemed to float, a-shine in the morning sun. Barry grunted, and awoke the other, pointing. Far off, in the air, was a speck.

"The *Walkure*!"

Now the men fretted, forced not to budge, that they might keep the balance trim. Thoughts of what it meant not to overtake it dulled their senses, made them silly. The younger began to sing, to shout, and talk like a babbling child. The *aéroplane*, like a living thing, swirled on.

Now they could make out the deck of the dirigible; now the men, clustered at its stern. Barry squinted his bloodshot eyes, for he thought he could make out a figure fluttering white. Nearer and nearer they crept, inch after inch.

Another hour passed. They were in sight of the coast. The *Walkure* seemed scarce a stone's throw away. Suddenly at its stern a succession of flashes blazed.

A dozen bullets whistled near the *Sheldrake*.

The young man sprang to his feet.

"Sit down!" barked Barry.

The aeroplane shot upwards, swooping at a sharp angle. Barry was gripping the wheel with vise-like clutch. The Krupp gun volleyed again; bullets pierced the wing above Barry's head. Still he steered upwards. The *Sheldrake* was falling behind. More missiles struck the hull, wrecked it utterly, made the great man-bird totter. Still he steered upwards. The dirigible was below them, far, yet far ahead. The machine gun spluttered on, and its bullets riddled the wings of the *Sheldrake*.

"Watch the engines," Barry growled.

Pete leered at him, and laughed hysterically. They had risen to a great height. The helmsman then eased his pedals, and the aeroplane shot forward on a level. A bullet struck the binnacle, and buried itself, fountaining splinters of wood and steel. The dirigible was very near. The great gray envelope loomed huge, hiding all but the stern of the deck. The firing ceased.

It was then that Barry leaned forward, and the *Sheldrake* ricocheted down, a falcon stooping to its prey. It descended on the top of the balloon. Barry could hear the shouts of its crew, and, he thought, the scream of a woman. There was a jolt. The bottom of the aeroplane touched the top of the dirigible.

Pete sprang forward crazily. Barry, shaking him into the seat at the helm, clambered down a stay, took something from his pocket, and applied it to the silk covering of the airship's gas bag. Then he lighted a match, scrambled back to his perch, and resumed the wheel. The *Sheldrake* soared off into space again, for New York, miles away.

Riot was reigning on the deck of the *Walkure*. Its men wept, cursed, prayed; but the mouths of its guns were silent.

Barry did not look back. He did not move, hoping that the spark in the fuse had died. An eternity of seconds was passing. Before, the mighty city, like a smoking caldron, in the morning sun, lay looming; but Barry did not see it. The whole world lay behind.

Barry looked back, and he screwed up his eyes. The *Walkure* had come to a standstill, commotion aboard her had ceased. Hope surged within him. Then there came a flare. The airship vanished into a sky of flame. A thunder pealed. He closed his eyes. It was the crack of doom.

Time passed. For two weeks Lieutenant Barry had lain on his cot in the naval hospital, wasting in delirium. At last, as if a curtain had been raised, he felt his senses coming back, and heard a soft voice.

"Barry!" it said.

He opened his wan, great eyes.

"Forgive me! He forced me with him. He stole me from my house. Forgive me. It was not I who sent the telegram. It was not I who stole the code." She paused. "It was Laurin, who was shot for it."

Barry raised himself. "Am I alive?" he muttered.

Far away sounded a trumpet call.

"What's that?" he gasped.

"Admiral Barton and his sailors, on parade."

The man fell back, and she looked at him, her gray eyes blinking.

"Your voice," he whispered. "That song has haunted me here."

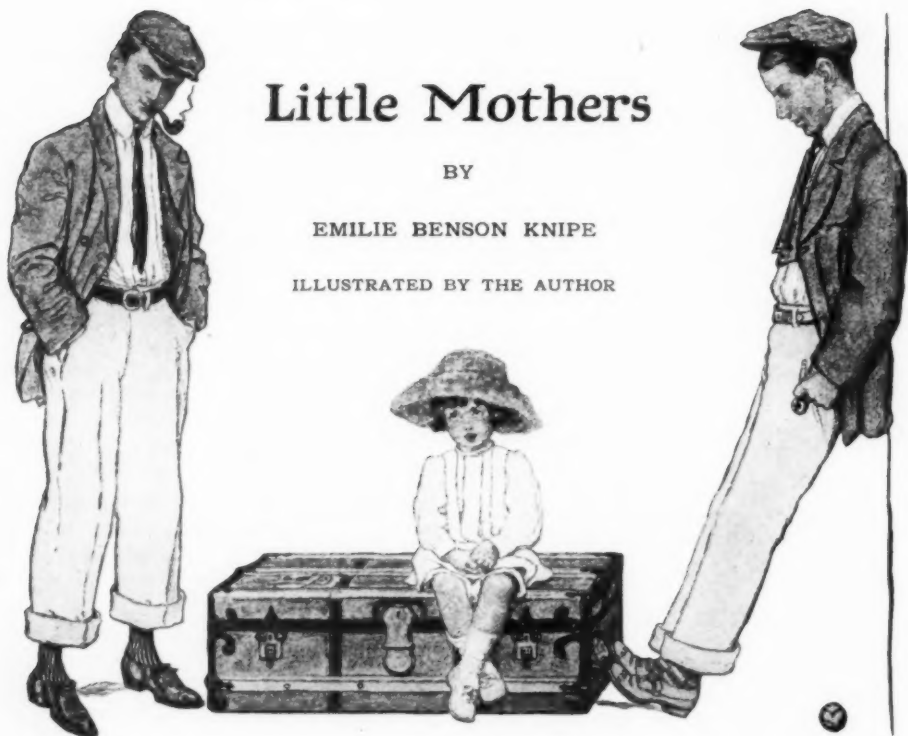
"Yes! It was just after you heard it from the *Sheldrake*. The oil was gone. We dropped to Bermuda for more. While he was ashore I escaped."

The young man sat up.

"You never cared?" he darted.

The little lady bent toward him.

"I always cared," she said.



Little Mothers

BY

EMILIE BENSON KNIPE

ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

P. STUYVESANT HEWITT paused irresolutely outside the door of his own rooms in the College Dormitory. The hilarious sounds that came from within were wholly strange to that abode of silence. He hesitated and looked about him to make sure he was on the right landing. Then he opened the door and stepped in.

He was greeted with shouts of, "Here he is! Here's Uncle Pete!" and out of the assembled crowd Norton pranced up to him with a tousled-headed youngster perched astride his shoulders. It was a cheerful child of about five years and seemed to be enjoying itself hugely.

Hewitt faltered. If he had not been a Junior he might have put this performance down as a novelty in hazing; as it was he stood dumb; he had never seen the child before and hardly knew the men by sight.

"Aw, kiss him! Don't be an unnatural uncle, Pete!" cried Norton. "Come on! Kiss the kid!"

Hewitt leaned forward stiffly and did as he was bid.

"That's more like it," said Norton approvingly. "But you needn't be afraid of him. He don't bite!"

"Where did you get it?" asked Hewitt, speaking for the first time. "And what is it doing here?" he added, appealing to Blaisdell, who was a guard on the football team and known to everyone.

"I brought it up," declared Blaisdell. "Norton needn't act as if he were the only friend the kid had. He's trying to claim all the credit. Jimmy Jenks and I talked to its mother. And say! she's the real thing in peaches all right, all right, and so's your other sister who was with her!"

Now it happened that Hewitt was the only child of a widowed mother and had suffered in consequence. He had been so hedged-in and safeguarded that, in the twenty years of his life, he had never had any fun whatever, and grew up a shy, diffident chap who longed for friends

but had no notion of how to make them. He had been permitted to go to college only because his father's will had so stipulated and, for two years, he had lived almost wholly without companionship of any kind and was known on the Campus as "that silent bird, Hewitt."

Yet all the while he had a keen desire to be like the men about him; to have the fellows drop into his rooms; to be, in a word, intimate with this happy, adolescent life surrounding him. He had made tentative efforts to attach himself to one or other of the cliques in his class; but an inquiring glance sent him off without a word. The truth is that Hewitt was desperately lonely; and, when he faced the crowd of noisy youths in his room, he resisted his first impulse to tell them they had made a mistake, hoping that, by keeping them there, he might break the ice that isolated him from his fellows. After all, it wouldn't be for long; someone would soon come to claim the child, and explanations would be forthcoming. In the meantime, he meant to enjoy the novelty of a noisy crowd in his rooms as long as he could.

"I hope you fellows found something to smoke," he said pleasantly.

"Sure we did," answered Jimmy Jenks, "but we're telling you about your sisters. You don't seem to appreciate 'em or you'd have had them out here long ago. They're peaches with a big P.—understand that!"

"Where did you see them?" asked Hewitt innocently.

Jenks explained.

"The kid's mother was wandering 'round—"

"Don't forget 'Sister,'" put in Blaisdell.

"I apologize," said Jenks humbly. "The kid's mother *and* 'Sister' were wandering 'round the Campus looking for some useless thing they couldn't find—that useless thing being you, Pete—when up come two perfect gentlemen or rather, to be exact, one perfect gentleman and—the right-guard of the foot-ball team, known as 'Black Bear' Blaisdell, on account of his huggin' propensities."

Jenks automatically dodged the playful blow he knew he might expect.

"Go on, Jimmy, and don't mind the 'Bear,'" said Norton.

"Well, as I was saying," Jenks continued. "These two perfect gentlemen thought that maybe these two perfect peaches were looking for some little old thing like the Library Building, and so they put on their Y. M. C. A. Guide-you-round-the-Campus expression and go up to 'em. But the ladies, being perfect peaches as I said before, replied that all they wanted was Mr. Hewitt, explaining that he was the kid's Uncle and they intended to leave it with him while they were away for a week or two. They thought it would be good for him 'cause his father said he was too much with women anyhow and did we agree with them? And of course, knowing my business, I did agree. But whether it was you, Pete, that was too much with women, or whether it was the kid they meant, I'm not sure, to this minute. However, seeing they had found *one* in whom they could have perfect confidence, they steered us up to a waiting automobile, got the chauffeur to tip the kid's trunk out of the machine and whooped themselves off to meet 'Charlie,' who's waiting at the station. We take it 'Charlie' is the kid's Dad; anyhow, he's a 'perfect Dear' and 'so patient he's always being imposed upon.' I said they could impose upon me to the limit, but they were out of hearing by that time. That's about all, wasn't it, 'Bear?'"

"There was that part about the measles," Blaisdell suggested.

"That's right," Jenks went on. "She said she thought the kid would be perfectly well, it having gotten over six or seven pink, measly things, and she didn't believe there was anything else it could have. But you were to feed it carefully, and if the worst came to the worst you could telegraph for Martha. I wrote down her address," he ended, producing a card.

Hewitt stared blankly.

"Telegraph for Martha?" he echoed, taking the card mechanically.

"Sure! She's the nurse, I'm thinking."

"Of course," agreed Hewitt weakly. This tale had put him in a panic. To keep a baby that didn't belong to him for

an afternoon was no great matter; but—"a week or two!"

"See here, you fellows," he protested, desperately. "You've made a mistake. It's a put-up job. These people evidently wanted to dispose of the child and have planted it on you."

"Back up! Back up!" shouted Jimmy Jenks, derisively. "You're on the wrong train, Pete. I tell you I saw 'em and they're peaches!"

"But I don't know the child," Hewitt persisted.

Norton's voice arose above the din.

"Twont do, Pete. Didn't it know you right off the reel? Say, Kiddie, who is that?" he asked, pointing a menacing finger at Hewitt.

"Nunky Pete!" replied the youngster promptly.

"Stung!" they shouted in chorus.

"But you told it to say that," Hewitt insisted when he could make himself heard. "Besides it isn't my name, anyhow. I'm Stuyvesant Hewitt."

"P. Stuyvesant Hewitt," corrected Jimmy Jenks. "And P. always stands for Peter."

"It happens to stand for Paul in my case," said Hewitt, wearily. The odds were against him and he began to realize the weakness of his position: since he had not declared himself in the beginning.

"That doesn't prove anything," Blaisdell roared. "Why, when the kid's mother asked Jimmy if he knew Mr. Hewitt, he said: 'Old Pete Hewitt? Sure—'"

"Wanting to seem friendly, you know," Jenks cut in.

"And she said," Blaisdell went on, "Do you call him that? What funny names college men do think up, or something to that effect."

"All of which goes to prove that you're trying to throw a scare into us and there's nothing doing! Here, take it!" and Norton deposited the child in Hewitt's arms.

"All right," said Hewitt, accepting the inevitable as gracefully as he knew how. "All right, we'll say no more about it; but I should like to know its name."

"What's your name, Kiddie?" asked Jenks, encouragingly.

"Fwancis Mawion Willowy," lisped the child, smiling up into the face of Hewitt who, with a groan, dropped it hurriedly on the floor and turned a pallid countenance to the crowd about him.

"For Heaven's sake, fellows," he cried prayerfully. "Is my nephew a female child?"

There was a sudden hush and then the silence was shattered by a roar of laughter. The men looked at Hewitt in undisguised admiration. They began to regret not having cultivated him sooner, for surely a chap who could act a part as he was doing must have something in him.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Jenks, "if I hadn't seen your sisters you might have fooled me!"

But Hewitt was sternly addressing the child seated on the floor, the center of all eyes.

"Are you a girl?" he demanded.

The child's lip began to turn outward in a most awful manner and the men moved nervously in anticipation of the coming storm.

Bobby Church dropped on one knee and patted it on the head.

"Now that's all right, old man. Never mind old Nunky Pete," he began consolingly, rubbing it behind the ears. "He's an old stick-in-the-mud and don't know a boy when he sees one! Next time you come to college you can stay with me, then Nunky Pete will be jealous."

The tempest was averted and the men, heaving a sigh of relief, complimented Bobby enthusiastically.

"That's what comes of raising bull-pups," Jenks explained. "Sort of gives one an insight into the infant mind."

"That's all right," said Bobby, "you fellows can kid each other as much as you like, but leave the boy alone. You nearly hurt his feelings that time."

"But *is* he a boy?" demanded Hewitt, anxiously.

"Sure thing," Bobby assured him. "Why, he'd have pink ribbons sticking out all over him if he wasn't."

Hewitt tried to consider the situation dispassionately. There was no doubt that he was expected to take the child in. Moreover, someone had to look after it



"Oh, but we're the dandy little mothers!"

until its parents turned up, and why not he? For the time being, it made him popular, or at least gave a center of attraction; and companionship was not only what he wanted but needed. After all, he concluded, the small boy would be missed in a very short time, and he eased his conscience by assuring himself that he would take good care of him. Evidently there was another Hewitt among the students who would relieve him of the responsibility long before the novelty wore off. With a fine show of resignation he voiced his acceptance of the charge and forthwith began planning for its comfort.

For the rest of the day and well into the night, Hewitt's rooms were filled with an admiring and enthusiastic crowd. They decided to call the boy "Frankie," voting Francis effeminate, and were pleased to find that he answered to that name without protest. They played with him, sang with him, galloped him up and down the hall "pick-a-back" and, in relays, kept him amused till hours past his customary bed-time.

Not until the crowd began to disperse did Hewitt realize the delicacy of his position. The thought of being left alone with Frankie chilled his ardor and, as the last of them started away, calling "good-night" to the sleepy boy, while they bestowed facetious advice upon Hewitt, he stopped Bobby Church with a pathetic appeal for advice.

"I say, Church," he pleaded. "You seem to know something about kids. What do I do if he cries in the night?"

"Well," Bobby began hesitatingly, "I can't say I know much about *kids*, but I have raised a lot of bull-pups of one kind or another and I guess it isn't so very different."

"I shouldn't think so," Hewitt agreed hopefully; "but you see, I don't know anything about dogs, either."

"It's just common sense," Bobby threw in easily.

"Of course," said Hewitt, "but I don't seem to have any knack for that sort of thing. Now at supper to-night I was feeding him carefully, the way his mother said to, on clam-fritters and jam

and coffee. I didn't think jam went with clam-fritters, but Frankie liked 'em together and it wasn't up to me to butt in. Anyway, every time I'd give him a spoonful he'd choke something awful, and at last he insisted upon feeding himself. Seemed to have lost confidence in me somehow, and told me his 'swallow' moved down, not up, when he worked it for himself."

"Of course it does," said Bobby blandly. "Any fool would know that. It's the same with pups."

"Well, that's just the point I'm trying to make," Hewitt insisted. "I don't feel qualified to handle this thing alone. Suppose he cries in the night. Common-sense says 'give him a bottle,' and I suppose 'any fool' would have a bottle handy—but I haven't. I looked all through his trunk, but I guess they forgot it and when I went to buy one, it was so late that all the toy-shops were closed. The only thing I have is a tooth-powder bottle. We can dump the powder out of it if you think best. It's got a patent kind of stopper that I believe would work all right if you filled it with milk, and it's the best I can do in the bottle line. Do you suppose he can manage with it?"

Bobby Church assumed a judicial air.

"I think it's time Frankie was weaned," he said soberly. "He looks to have plenty of bone, his points are all right for his age and he seems to have a good coat; but my experience is that the quicker you get 'em off milk the better. They aren't so liable to distemper."

"Of course if you think he'd better be weaned—" Hewitt began.

"It's an awful bother," Bobby interrupted. "They go on yapping for days sometimes, and I guess in this case it's not up to us. Anyway, we wont try to-night. You wash out that tooth-powder bottle and I'll go and get a quart of milk and some sugar. And say, I'll come over and stay the night out, so as to get you started. Two of us can handle him better, in case anything *did* happen."

"I'd be tickled to death if you would," said Hewitt gratefully. And it was so arranged.

Neither Hewitt nor Church slept much

that night. The flippant, cheerful view of the situation that had predominated during the day gave place to an uneasy, anticipatory feeling during the slowly-passing hours of darkness. The boy slept soundly in Hewitt's bed, while they talked in whispers, and occasionally stood watching him with held breath, thinking of vague possibilities that might arise to confound them.

Along toward morning Hewitt awoke from a troubled nap on the couch to find his companion heating something in the chafing-dish.

"Just the temperature," said Bobby proudly, after testing it with his finger.

"But what's it for?" demanded Hewitt.

"For Frankie," replied Bobby. "I think he ought to have it whether he wakes or not. Puppies are fed every two hours before they're weaned, and it's been at least nine since Frankie had his supper. I'm for giving him a bottle."

"All right," agreed Hewitt. And Frankie, much to their delight, woke up, took a few pulls at the bottle and dropped off to sleep again.

Bobby and Hewitt beamed at each other in complacent superiority.

"Oh, but we're the dandy little mothers!" chuckled Church, and forthwith flung himself on the couch with an air of one about to take a well-earned rest.

The first few days that followed were serenely peaceful. Frankie took things as they came without demur, and the pride of Bobby Church and Hewitt waxed great. They regarded their responsibility with increasing seriousness; and, when Jimmy Jenks, or Blaisdell, presumed to offer suggestions as to the boy's care, they put them aside with contemptuous sniffs of disapproval.

"You might think they were the original 'Congress of Mothers' to hear 'em!" growled Blaisdell.

"Now, see here, 'Bear,'" Bobby retorted. "We don't butt in telling you how to play foot-ball, do we? Well, you stick to your line and we'll stick to ours."

"You fellows make me tired. You seem to think you're the only people who ever had a kid!" said Jimmy Jenks, bitterly, when an offering of doughnuts to

Frankie had been rejected as unfit for infant assimilation. "You'll be lecturing on 'Race Suicide' next."

"Yes," said Hewitt, "and it's the old maids without children who always know best how to raise 'em. When you've had our experience, come and talk to us. In the meantime, cut it out!"

Jenks departed, vowing "he'd show 'em!"

Later he returned and addressed them haughtily.

"You two are just putting up a bluff to make us think you know all about kids. Why, I don't believe you ever sterilize his bottle, and as for taking his temperature — you wouldn't know how to go about it. Then there's 'Dietary Data' and 'The Open Air Treatment for Rickets.' What do you know of that? And where's the thing to cut his teeth on? I suppose you'd get a soft-rubber ring, wouldn't you? Well, you'd be dead wrong! You can't sterilize 'em properly and they're simply alive with bacilli till you can't rest!"

"What's the matter with a bone?" asked Church, scoffingly.



"Common sense says, 'Give him a bottle'."

Jenks had stopped for lack of breath, while Hewitt looked at Bobby in consternation.

"Where did you learn all that?" he asked in a most conciliatory tone.

"Out of that!" Jenks asserted, and from under his coat he produced a book which he flung on the table. Bobby picked it up and read aloud the title, "Things Every Mother Should Know."

"Where did you get it?" he asked.

"I bought it," Jenks went on, somewhat mollified by the impression he was making. "I saw it advertised in a magazine and tried to get it out of the College Library; but they threatened to have me expelled. Seemed to think I was joking, and when I told them I was looking for something up-to-date and full of human-interest, they got grouchier than ever—so I had to buy it. It is for the kid's sake, you understand, and I expect you fellows to chip in on it."

Thereafter, on the strength of "Things Every Mother Should Know," from which he quoted upon all occasions, Jenks assumed a knowledge and au-

thority on the rearing of children that was difficult to combat. Hewitt capitulated at once and procured a thermometer forthwith. Bobby Church, as was to be expected, proved skeptical.

"You can't raise pups out of a book," he reiterated, scornfully, and there were endless arguments in which Hewitt inclined first to one side and then to the other.

"I tell you, Jimmy," Bobby declared, emphatically, "you keep on bothering that kid and you'll spoil his disposition. You'll get him off his feed and then your troubles are only beginning; you'll never be able to break him at all. Your books are all right in theory, maybe, but if there's a mother's milk child that can hold a candle to our tooth-powder-bottle baby you'll have to show me."

"There's something in that, too," Hewitt agreed. "This taking his temperature every two hours is all very well; but as he says himself, 'What's the use of taking my tempewature, Nunky Pete, if I haven't any tempewature?' And I'll be hanged if I can see either."

Jimmy Jenks regarded them with an air of pitying condescension.

"You do it to be sure he hasn't any fever," he explained. "You couldn't tell otherwise."

"Go on! Of course you could," Bobby declared. "Wouldn't his nose be hot? You can tell in a minute if a puppy has fever."

"But this isn't a puppy," Jenks almost shouted.

"Same thing," Bobby replied easily.

"Well, I don't know, of course," Hewitt put in, hesitatingly, "but it seems to me that it would bother Frankie almost as much to feel his nose every two hours as to take his temperature. Still, I'm willing to do anything you fellows say."

"You're too damn conscientious, Pete," Bobby returned, pleasantly. "Let him run. You'll know when there's anything wrong with him. There hasn't been a yap out of him, yet, has there?"

"That's one of the things that worries me," Jenks asserted, opening his authority. "Listen to this: 'Crying in an infant is a perfectly normal process and helps to develop the lungs. A child who

never cries is usually so debilitated and weak that a physician's advice is imperative.' Now what do you think of that?"

Jenks glared at the others as if defying them to answer.

"Rot!" grunted Bobby. "I never did believe in your crazy book, and see here," he went on, menacingly, "if you start pinching that kid, or doing anything to make him cry, you're going to get in trouble with your uncle Robert; mind that! I don't propose to have Frankie made a martyr to any fool book written by a nutty amateur. I won't stand for it and that's all there is to it!"

While this sort of controversy was going on from day to day, Frankie was having the time of his life. There was not a minute during his waking hours that some enthusiastic student was not devoting his leisure to the child's amusement and the quadrangle between the dormitories made a splendidly safe place for him to play. So far he had been no trouble whatever, and at times Hewitt forgot that the boy did not actually belong to him. Now and then, however, he had an uneasy thought that perhaps Frankie's mother might be wondering where her little boy was. On the other hand, there ought not to be any difficulty in locating the youngster, for by this time he was as well-known as the captain of the foot-ball team. But Hewitt felt that there must be a mystery somewhere, and this feeling was emphasized when he discovered that he was the only Hewitt among the three-thousand-odd students in the University. However, there was nothing he could think of to do but wait, and this fitted in with his inclinations, admirably. Frankie had become an institution and Hewitt was enjoying his official position as administrator.

It was inevitable, of course, that trouble should come sooner or later.

Bobby Church awoke before day-break one morning to find Hewitt bending over him with an anxious face.

"Come quick, he's awfully sick!" Hewitt whispered, and Bobby leaped out of bed.

"What do you think it is?" asked

Bobby as they hurried along the corridor.

"I don't know," replied Hewitt. "I thought it might be teething. That book of Jenks'—"

"H u m p h !" grunted Bobby. "He's got a mouthful of grinders. It's more like some of Jimmy's theories getting in their work. I expected it. What does the kid say for himself?"

"Not much. He just pats his hand on his tummy and says, 'I've such a headache here, Nunky Pete, and I think you'd better take my tempewature!'"

"Is his nose hot?" asked Bobby.

"Not very," Hewitt replied. "Only about half-a-degree."

Frankie brightened momentarily on seeing Bobby; but promptly relapsed into a deep slumber from which he awoke at short intervals with howls of pain.

Bobby Church tried to assume his usual air of confidence, but he was plainly disturbed by the child's intermittent moaning.

"I'm going for Jenks," he said finally. "He got the kid into this with his blooming theories. Now he can get him out."

Jimmy Jenks came quickly, carrying "Things Every Mother Should Know" under his arm.



"Hello, Auntie, I've been having a fine time"

"Do you think he's going to die?" Hewitt asked him in an awed tone.

"Now, don't get panicky," Jenks said reassuringly. "Remember what the book says. 'Keep your head, use common-sense and don't get in the habit of sending for the doctor till all other means are exhausted.' Now for the 'other means.' Have you tried a bottle on him?"

"No, you see—"

"Exactly what I thought," Jenks cut

in. "The kid's hungry. Give him a bottle."

But Frankie on being aroused pushed the bottle away forcibly and would have none of it.

"Got anything to eat?" demanded Jenks, who was now in full charge.

"Crackers, and cheese, and beer," said Hewitt.

"Give him a cracker," Jimmy commanded.

"Don't like 'em," cried Frankie when the cracker was presented.

"How about the beer and cheese?" Hewitt suggested. "I've heard beer was fine for invalids."

"That's for nursing mothers," Jenks replied scornfully.

"Well, you can give me some, if it's handy," Bobby volunteered.

"Get it yourself," said Hewitt rather savagely. "You're no nursing mother, and how anyone can think of eating with that poor kid suffering I don't see."

"There's nothing the matter with him except Jimmy's fool theories," Bobby insisted.

"The child is hungry," Jenks protested positively. "Don't you see the way he holds on to himself. We've got to get him something to eat."

"There's that all-night lunch joint," Hewitt proposed.

"Good thought," exclaimed Jenks approvingly. "Bobby you go out and get something. Might bring a lot of things and we'll try 'em one at a time."

For the next three hours Frankie was beset with food of many kinds but he refused to eat a mouthful. They offered him ham sandwiches, fried eggs and dill pickles; they held out frankfurters temptingly on the end of a fork and begged him to try a bit of Hamburg steak; apples, oranges, bananas and cereals of many kinds were proffered with promises of reward for each mouthful; they went to much trouble to procure milk toast and when this was thrust aside by the now exasperated child, Jenks again had recourse to "Things Every Mother Should Know."

Hewitt, for the twentieth time suggested a doctor, but Jimmy sternly shook his head.

"I know what to do," he said with confidence, while he turned the pages feverishly. "Ah, here it is. 'When the child refuses all other food the only alternative is a wet-nurse.' There you are!"

Bobby and Hewitt looked at each other vaguely.

"What is a wet-nurse?" asked Bobby at length.

"Why, it's a—a—why, it's the 'only alternative!'"

Jimmy's stuttering reply was a confession of ignorance, but at that moment Hewitt had an inspiration.

"I'll tell you what it is," he cried. "It's Martha!"

"Sure thing!" exclaimed Jimmy. "'If worst comes to worst send for Martha,'" he quoted.

Hewitt hunted for the card bearing the address.

"Here it is," he said at length, "but there's no name."

"What difference does that make?" said Bobby. "We've got to send for her."

"But who shall we telegraph to?" Hewitt asked.

"To Martha!" they answered him in chorus.

"Yes, I know that, but Martha *who*?" demanded Hewitt.

"The Martha your sister said to send for," Jenks replied impatiently.

"But don't you understand," Hewitt burst out desperately. "She wasn't my sister. I give you fellows my word I never saw this kid till the day Blaisdell brought him up here. I haven't any sisters, and I don't know Martha from Adam!"

"Is that on the square?" said Bobby finally.

"On the square," Hewitt answered with solemn emphasis.

"Then who belongs to Frankie?" gasped Jenks, wholly bewildered.

"You can search me," said Hewitt, hopelessly.

Meanwhile their efforts to feed Frankie had resulted in waking that young person into a peevish irritability. He sat up in the middle of the bed and began to cry. At first his efforts were spasmodic, but presently he settled into his gait and yelled rhythmically, gathering strength with each inspiration.

"I can't stand this, it's simply awful," said Hewitt. "I'm for a doctor," and this time Jenks made no protest.

Hewitt rushed from the room and down the stairs two at a time. At the foot of the last flight he collided with some one and, glancing up, was surprised to see an extremely pretty girl regarding him inquiringly.

"I beg your pardon," he murmured.

The girl blushed slightly. "I'm looking for Mr. Hewitt," she said, evidently feeling that some explanation for her presence was necessary.

"I am Mr. Hewitt," he answered.

The girl smiled prettily. "But hardly the Mr. Hewitt I want. He is a professor here—a half-brother of my sister-in-law—and her little boy is staying with him. We have had no word from him—"

A light had broken in upon Hewitt and he interrupted precipitately.

"Can you make Frankie stop crying?" he demanded.

"Of course I can," she replied confidently.

"Then come with me," he commanded and, regardless of conventions, he grasped her by the wrist and hurried her up the stairs. Breathless they arrived and, without ceremony, Hewitt led them through the study into the bed-room.

Bobby Church and Jimmy Jenks drew back, and the girl, undismayed, walked up to the yelling boy, grasped him firmly by the shoulder and shook him till it seemed as if his teeth rattled.

"Frankie Wetheril," she said, sternly, "stop crying at once!" The three men watched with admiration. Slowly Frankie's countenance assumed its normal hue, his sobbing ceased, and then he turned his head.

"Hello, Auntie," he said, cheerfully. "Where did you come from? I've been havin' a fine time."

"Do you think he's very sick?" questioned Hewitt much relieved.

"Sick?" the girl repeated. "Not at all!" Then, noting with an appreciative eye the light lunches brought for Frankie, "What he needs is a big dose of bicarbonate of soda and a good spanking. I've seen him like this before."

"Just the same with pups," murmured Bobby under his breath.

"We didn't know, but we were a bit worried," Jimmy put in. "We were about to send for Martha."

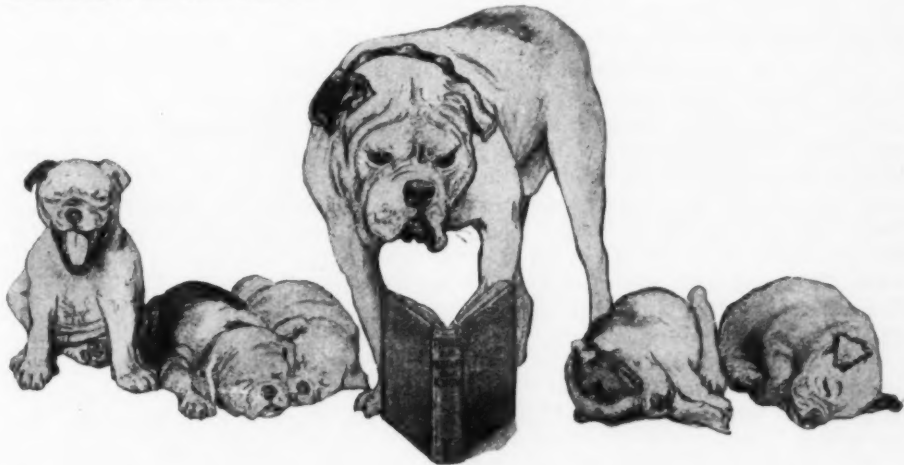
"Why, I'm Martha," said the girl with a beaming smile.

Bobby began to stutter. "Are you the nurse?—the—the—"

"Bobby," Hewitt interrupted, "Suppose you and Jimmy dress the kid while I explain the situation to Miss Wetheril in the other room," and with much aplomb Hewitt led the girl into the study and closed the door behind him.

Bobby and Jimmy looked at each other for a full minute.

"Stung!" they muttered in unison and turned to dress their Frankie for the last time.





He stared at the redoubts now hardly discernible in the thickening night

Loves of War

BY HUGH PENDEXTER

Author of "Sergeant Keeny's Romance," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY HANSON BOOTH

FOR weeks the rank and file in both armies had sympathized with the impatience of their great leaders.

Grant was hungry to open the spring campaign, when, he believed, Petersburg must fall—and hasten the end of the war. Lee already had agreed with Mr. Davis that the city was no longer tenable and that, once spring offered dry roads, the army must make its escape. Thus March brought a tang of nervous expectancy even to the humblest.

Fillmore, second lieutenant in McKenzie's cavalry, seemed oblivious of his companion's presence, as he leaned

against his horse and stared at the grim, defiant redoubts, now hardly discernible in the thickening night. The nine months' siege was responsible for much of the character and age in his boyish face, as well as for the intensity of his mental pre-occupation. His friend again addressed him, but he paid no heed. His frowning gaze was turned toward the leaden horizon, as if through the gathering gloom he could behold Richmond, a score of miles away, crouching in fear of capture and prepared to capitulate, once Petersburg had fallen. Then with softer yearning eyes he followed the sky-

line to the east, where he knew the noble Lincoln was waiting at City Point, watching the course of events.

"What's on your mind? Will you please wake up?" querulously repeated the other youth, who was in civilian's clothes.

"Beg pardon, William; I was thinking," apologized Fillmore with a start. "Where's your horse?"

"I left him back there a bit. Where do you ride to-night?"

The opacity of the hour concealed the increased color in Fillmore's tanned face, as he turned his back to the sullen city, and awkwardly confessed: "I was going out to see your sister. Will you return with me?"

"I hardly think you can see Nancy to-night. She intends going to her aunt's," dissuaded William.

Fillmore slowly wheeled and stretched a hand toward the flickering lights of the enemy. "Petersburg is about to fall," he cried in an impassioned voice. "And with it must fall Richmond. Then the life of the rebellion will die out, and we who are left will return to peaceful ways. But those of us who are not destined to return will be the better for one more touch of peace and womanliness before we go."

His companion bent his brows sharply. "What has that to do with my sister?" he demanded

"William, I have been calling on Miss Nancy for quite a few months now. You must know that I love her. She is the only good thing I've seen on the banks of the Appomattox. You knew I loved her?"

"I suspected as much," replied William in a low voice. "But I do not know that she returns your feeling."

"Don't say you think she is indifferent to me," cried Fillmore, clutching the other's arm. "My God, man! think what it means to me! When my heart's been sick, I've thought of her out there on the Thatcher pike. It seems but yesterday I first saw her. I was nursing a lame horse in the rear of a scouting party and stopped there to rest. Since then I have come almost to believe she does not think unfavorably of me."

William shook his head unseen and sought to discourage him: "I fear her interest in you is only friendly."

"You are pretty cruel, old man. I will ask her to-night."

"She will not be at home. You had better put off your visit for a few days."

"To-night is my last chance—perhaps." Then he paused awkwardly.

"Why?" half whispered William.

Fillmore bit his lip. "I forgot myself, I musn't say another word—"

"Meaning you can't trust the Pauldings, eh?" demanded William. "Well, maybe Nance will forgive that innuendo, but I will not."

"Will, Will!" remonstrated Fillmore, holding the other back as he turned to stalk angrily away. "How can you be so absurd? I know you and your people are true blue, but I ought not even to have hinted at my orders—still it isn't exactly breaking the spirit of the law to say we move to-morrow—under Ord. Petersburg is doomed."

"Doomed!" hoarsely repeated the young man, removing his hat and mopping his brow.

"Yes, Will; the siege is about ended," assured Fillmore. "That is why I wanted to see your sister to-night. It may be my last ride on the Thatcher pike."

As he spoke he swept his mind clear of all but thoughts of her, and the deep lines that did not belong in the lineaments of youth softened—almost seemed to disappear. For the moment he could see only her grave, gray eyes and quaint little face as she had stood by the ragged fence that first day.

"Maybe I'm mistaken about her feelings toward you," suggested Will in a low voice. "Anyway, she'll be home in a few days and then you can find out for yourself."

"We move early to-morrow," muttered Fillmore. "Some of us wont come back. Well, Will, if I'm alive I'll be out by the end of the week. Perhaps—until then, it is just as well if I do not know the truth. God bless her!"

"Ay, God bless her!" gently murmured the other. Then after a pause of some moments he inquired, "And what part does Sheridan play to-morrow?"

"He will whirl up from Dinwiddie and menace Lee's right," Fillmore answered without hesitation. Then he caught himself sharply, and said: "But not a word of this, even to the folks at home. I was thinking aloud. It would be almost a crime to give that information even to a brother soldier. Perhaps it counts less in your case."

"Trust me," and William held out his hand; "I must go now; we'll meet again soon, old man. And may we always retain our regard for each other."

"Tut, Will; that's a queer thing to say; of course we will," he half laughed, half complained. "I'm not going to be snuffed out. I've just made up my mind I shall pull through this thing; and whether Miss Nancy says yea or nay, you and I will be good friends—always. Good-night." Their hands met in a fumbling clasp; and then the night drew a curtain between them and Fillmore, mounting his horse, could follow the other only as an incautious step occasionally plunged him splashing into a mudhole.

Ordinarily this parting, on the eve of some desperate endeavor, had been very hard for Fillmore; for he looked upon Will as his brother. But the latter's doubts as to the status of Nancy Paulding's affection had robbed all other sorrows of their stings. Fillmore was oblivious to the raw wind and ghost-like swirls of mist, sweeping in from the Appomattox, just as he failed to realize he might just now have parted for the last time from his friend. Unconscious of the night, his memory hung an Autumn's westering sun in a turquoise sky and canopied with glory a gray-eyed maid, standing near an open door—and waiting for him.

Then he remembered William's persistent discouraging; and it hurt him. He feared that Will knew more than his friendship would allow him to say. And yet—if he did know it, it would become him as a friend to speak truthfully—and end all doubt. If the hurt must be given, let it be given quickly, Fillmore told himself. In the game of war there is but scant chance to hark back over old trails, and the love-sick soldier who

would draw a *post obit* on the future must act with great decision.

"Will may be right, but when a man's about to take a chance of stopping a bullet he'd like to know for sure," he muttered. "It's bad business carrying unanswered questions along in your kit to eternity. If she said 'no' I'd have nothing to come back for. If she said 'yes,' I'd fight like the devil—"

"H'm! why not? If she's gone I'll follow and overtake her. Propriety be hanged; it is a matter of life or death to me. I have until morning anyway."

And with this sudden resolve he reined his horse about and soon was spurring along the Thatcher pike.

The few miles were covered at a gallop, the youth riding with head bowed and the problems of the night and road left for his mount to solve. That his trust was not misplaced was evidenced when the sagacious animal turned in from the pike and slowly picked a path to a clump of trees, a few rods from the house. Fillmore emerged from his dreams with a jolt and gazed anxiously at the low, squat building. Then his heart thumped nervously, for a yellow glow in the window made him hope he was in time.

Still, it might be her father—and as he approached the door he swung from the path, unable to deny his hungry eyes longer. The cheap curtains were drawn closely, only showing points and threads of light where long usage had scored its victories. But at one side his gaze found an opening that disclosed the room. At first he did not understand; then incredulity filled his face, only to give way before a fiercer emotion. With an articulate cry he staggered back, clawing at his saber.

The man in Confederate gray stood with outstretched arms, in a pose of farewell that was accented by his hat and gloves on a nearby chair. The girl was only fitfully revealed by the fluttering light of a solitary candle.

This was the tableau Lieutenant Fillmore saw, when with revolver drawn and saber under his left arm, he burst in over the threshold.



"I shall take this man to camp long enough to have him shot"

"Don't move, Mr. William Paulding," he growled, ignoring the white face of the girl that was brought into uncanny relief as she shrank deeper into the shadows.

"Why are you here?" she whispered, her eyes haggard with horror as the potentials of a tragedy unfolded before her.

"Fillmore!" was all William could ejaculate.

"What do you want?" the girl asked again.

"I shall take this man to camp long enough to have him shot," gritted Fillmore, his tone trembling with passion; and with a quick movement he advanced and removed his prisoner's belt.

"To have him shot?" dully repeated the girl, the sudden agony seeming to harden her face into ice.

"You can hold me only as a prisoner of war," cried William, now finding his voice. "I am wearing my own uniform."

"You're a damn spy," grimly corrected Fillmore, his throat contracting as he more fully grasped the significance of his discovery. The true import of William's uniform; his many visits to camp; his professed friendship; his curiosity; the girl's encouragement of the Northern officer's visits—were now as clearly revealed to Fillmore's comprehension as each twig and leaf in a forest is brought out in unforgettable detail by one flash of lightning in the night. The worst hurt of all was the knowledge that—she—had played a part in the plot.

"I am in uniform," persisted William, his face blanching, but showing no cowardly fear.

"You can not mean to take him from here and treat him as a spy," whispered the girl, approaching closer.

"He shall pay the full price," choked Fillmore, extending his left arm to keep her back.

"What harm can he do if you let him go?" she pleaded.

"Harm?" and he laughed harshly. "Maybe not much. And to think of all the questions cunningly put to me throughout all these months! And the Pauldings were such staunch Northerners!"

"We never posed as Northerners until you came along and took it for granted," she defended, her eyes sparkling. "We were born in Virginia and—we are loyal to our state."

"And I am loyal to Abe Lincoln's government," he cried, his face settling in new lines of rigidity. "Off with that coat, William. Now, right about face."

"Lieutenant Fillmore, will you not allow me to talk with you one moment?" begged the girl, grasping his arm, and seeking to pull him away. She was fearing now she had set in motion, in the person of this young soldier with the haggard face, a horrible, relentless machine.

"No! no!" he mumbled, endeavoring to shake her off—and for the moment neglecting his prisoner.

The latter's eyes narrowed as he noted that the menacing revolver muzzle wavered. His teeth flashed in a brief smile.

He seemed to be standing with lax muscles—but in reality he was gathering himself for a spring.

"Stand aside, Miss Paulding," commanded Fillmore.

"You would send me from you?" she murmured in a low voice.

He turned and gazed at her with a cruel smile distorting his face. But he was not jeering her; he was mocking himself and his boyish trustfulness.

"Stand back, Miss Paulding," he politely repeated.

Before either of the others could anticipate his purpose, the prisoner had launched his lithe body forward. At the outset Fillmore was borne backwards, but did not lose his feet. The two clinched and became one writhing, panting unit. In giving back under the impact of the shock, Fillmore had dropped his weapons, and was further handicapped by William's having muffled the coat about his head. He was blinded and half choked; and yet rage burned him so fiercely that he fought on.

The girl remained mute, yet with lips slightly parted, as if trying to voice her terror. Then as the combatants whirled near her she quickly pushed a chair behind the lieutenant and they crashed to the floor.

Then she gave one short, sharp scream.

Fillmore appreciated to the full her act of treachery—her outcry telling him much; and he was spurred on to superhuman efforts. Almost as soon as his shoulders touched the boards his opponent was hurled aside and halfway across the room. Quickly rising to his knees, Fillmore regained his revolver and once more grimly commanded:

"Attention. Right about face!"

"He shall not go with you," she cried brokenly, the old incisiveness gone from her voice. The futility of her effort to aid in defeating him had exhausted her spirit.

"March!" growled Fillmore, staggering to his feet and licking his bloody lips. He viciously jabbed the muzzle of the long revolver into the prisoner's back.

With shoulders squared and head erect, although his face was white with the thought of death, William started for the door, his eyes conveying one last farewell to the sobbing girl.

"Stop!" she screamed. "Stop! stop!"

The wild note of entreaty caused Fillmore to pause, despite his setness and savagery of purpose. "You make it hard for all of us," he reminded her irritably.

"You must not take him," she whimpered; "he is so young."

"He is a spy," thundered Fillmore. "His tongue must be stopped. Would to God mine had been, before I babbled the secrets that hold men's lives. D'you know what it means if he gets inside the city?" And trembling with emotion he pointed in the direction of Petersburg, while his prisoner stiffly stood at attention. "It means death for my friends, men as young as he. It means poverty, loneliness and bitter old age for folks up North. By heavens! it means the same for you folks down here. I aint drawing any geography line of suffering; the quicker this war is over, the happier the South will be. Attention, prisoner! Right wheel—march!"

"Oh, as you love me, stop!" she cried. "Let him go! Let him go!"

"Stop it, Nance!" hoarsely commanded William.

"I had come here—to speak of love," Fillmore stammered, unheeding his prisoner's protest. Then, passionately: "What's the use to talk? It's all impossible."

"If you will let him go, I will promise you he shall remain here with father and me till morning—when he can harm no one. Father will be here soon," she wildly continued, creeping to him on her knees, and fumbling for his hand.

"For God's sake, Nancy, not that! Get up and compose yourself," groaned William, raising her to her feet.

"No, you shall not die. It's a dog's death!" she cried. Then to Fillmore, speaking very slowly: "If you will let him go I will—love you—"

Fillmore slowly lowered his weapon, and, turning to study her frenzied face, leaned on his prisoner's shoulder in the old boyish way. "Love me!" he whispered, his lips twitching. "That would be a rich price for you to pay."

"No, no! It is impossible, of course. I understand your willingness to sacrifice yourself; and I know that a man who would release a spy is not worthy of a good woman's love. It is shameful that you were forced to say those words—and yet they win."

And, straightening, he spun his prisoner around, bringing him face to face with the girl. "Here's your prisoner, Miss Paulding. Keep him here till morning. I shall have a guard down the road. If he is seen outside he will be shot. I shall give orders to that effect. It may seem as if I did not trust you thoroughly, Miss Paulding; but at least you have won his life."

And he turned and opened the door.

She ran after him, but on the threshold he halted and faced about, raising a hand and motioning her to fall back. His face looked a drab white against the sinister darkness of the night. His eyes were heavy, as if with physical pain. But as he gazed, it seemed as if his own anguish had begotten a pity for her suffering, and not unkindly, but very wearily, he explained:

"I should have told you, Miss Paulding, that I glanced through the window on approaching the door. I saw your

guest kneeling at your feet. He is not your brother. It is your lover I have released. Good-night. Good-by."

The assault of Wright and Park on the outer works of Petersburg at four o'clock in the gray light of morning was successful. Lieutenant Fillmore waited, as thousands of others were only waiting, for the word that the enemy had evacuated the city. His men were as tigers in leash, eager to throw their sabers between the Appomattox and Richmond.

The last few days had been a horrible dream to him, relieved only when fierce fighting had stifled every thought but the wish to plunge gladly into the promise of death.

A hospital orderly saluted and stood at attention:

"Lieutenant Fillmore, a wounded prisoner is asking for you. I think he is an officer," he said.

Hardly realizing that he was heeding a message Fillmore made his way to where groups of infantry were depositing wounded men in a long row. Then he found himself bending over a white-

faced youth, whose whimsical smile caused him to gasp: "Will!"

"Bill Trevers, at your service," murmured the other. "Second cousin to the incomparable Nancy, and at one time masquerading as her brother."

"Can I do anything for you?" gently asked Fillmore, all anger gone in the presence of approaching death.

"No—yes; that is—for her you can. I didn't budge till morning, that time. She and the old man and I sat it out in the kitchen. She played square."

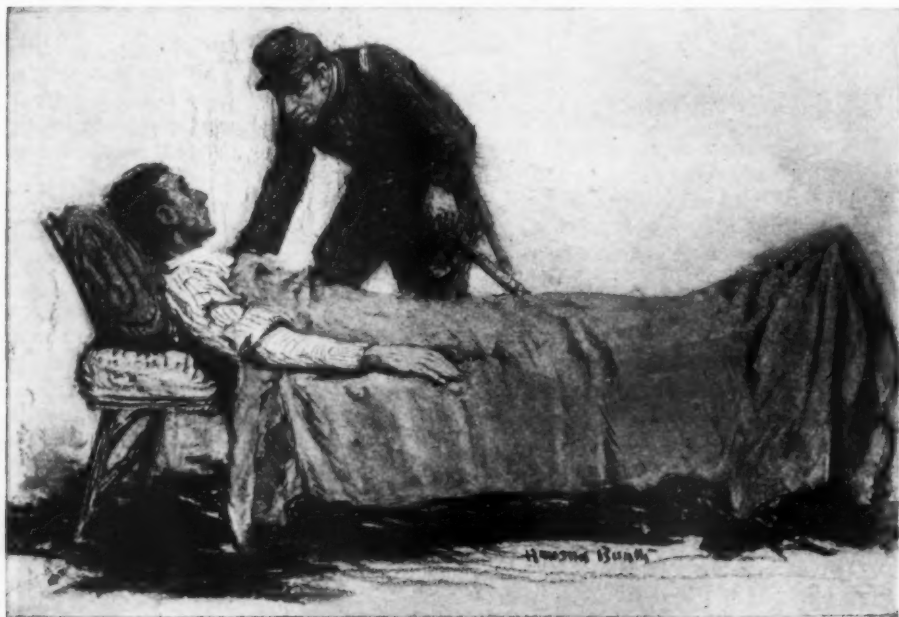
"I know, I know! But you're hurt—let me get you a surgeon."

"My wounds are past surgeons," replied Trevers, speaking with difficulty. "But you can heal more serious hurts. That night—when you looked through the window—"

"Yes, yes," whispered Fillmore.

"She had just rejected me—She loves you—She said so," the lips flutteringly whispered. "Ride out—the Thatcher pike—to-night—waiting for you."

The life-light went out of his eyes, and Fillmore gently crossed the smoke-grimed hands on the still breast of his comrade.



"Can I do anything for you?" gently asked Fillmore



She sat down and stared for ten minutes

Heloise and the Law of Signs

BY PEARL WILKINS

Author of "The Call of the City," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY IRMA DEREMEAUX

I

THE superstitions of the parents are visited upon the children. A man forgets the preamble of the Constitution, the rule of three, the function of the liver and Paul Revere's Ride; but fix in his mind early enough a belief that if he meets a red-haired girl he will see a white horse; if his left ear burns Smith's calling him a contemptible cur, and if he loses \$4.86 at cards his wife will surely meet him next morning with a loving kiss and a milliner's bill for \$12—fix, I say, any or a part of such lore in his brain and all the Professors of Hypnotism wont be able to eradicate it.

So be it. If you are convinced that to sneeze on Friday is for sorrow, you *wont* sneeze, even though you be at a musicale given by Mrs. Van Courtney Wicksham; "marry in May, you'll rue the day," may save you from marrying a chorus girl; and the loss of your lucky rabbit's foot on the psychological night may, if you are a burglar, prevent you from breaking into a house.

Heloise sold hats. This sounds like sentence No. 3, exercise 7, of Remsen's Revised French Grammar, but it isn't. She got paid for selling them—\$8.00 per week, to be exact. Steele & Striker paid her. Theirs is the establishment described in the catalogues as having "few equals either in London or Paris, and which blends a meat market and a grocery with silks and satins without violence to the taste and is ten stories high, with additional floors below the street level."

Heloise achieved her position with them the same day that, going on an errand to the corner grocery, she found a 25 cent "Swastika" pin wedged in a crack in the pavement. She picked it up and pinned it inside her shirt-waist for good luck. That very afternoon her cousin Leonora came up from a conference with the electrician's wife on the second floor with news that the lady's sister knew of a "sales-lady"—(no experience necessary)—wanted at Steele & Striker's to sell artificial flowers.

Heloise lost no time in presenting herself before the Powers that Hired, but

she was discouraged to find that fifty other girls hadn't either. She got the job though, for the same reason that Venus got the apple marked "for the fairest"—or was it by virtue of the "Swastika" pin piercing the under-flap of her shirt-waist?

For six months she presided over a counter of ten-cent bunches of black roses, blue geraniums and purple poppies, on the first floor, "third aisle to the right as you enter," amid the noise of hundreds of feet perpetually "kissing" the bare floors, the glare of unshaded electric lights and the whir of wire change-baskets over her head. Then she was promoted to the millinery department, rising in one bound seven stories and \$2.00 per week. The superintendent, who first engaged her, had not forgotten her face, her figure, nor her way of wearing her hair.

She was put at the green table, for there were as many girls as tables and as many colors as girls. The room was a vast one, nearly at the top of the building, softly lighted, tinted and carpeted in vernal green. In the French-plate mirrors above the polished tables were reflected women—endlessly and always women, lounging in the deep-green velvet chairs, pruning, peacock-like, at the sight of their reflections in new and expensive head-gear, examining imported "creations" through lorgnettes—tall, queenly women, short, dumpy ones, blonde women, dark women, bored, beautiful, ugly, old, young women, but each with the aid of dress-makers, manicures and beauty doctors trying to eclipse the others—and all surprisingly, even appallingly well-dressed, in the eyes of a girl brought up in Babylon, Nebraska—where women marry at seventeen, are *passée* at twenty-two; and at thirty resign themselves to sun-bonnets and calf-skin shoes and a life of dish-washing, hoeing the garden and catering to the hired man's appetite.

But Heloise's mother, after the cooking and ironing and bed-making and scrubbing and churning and chicken-feeding and milk-straining and mending for one day were finished, had sometimes found time, by the light of a cloudy ker-

osene lamp, to read the works of Bertha M. Clay and Mrs. Mary J. Holmes.

So she had named her fourth daughter "Heloise" after a favorite heroine, who had "eyes blue as violets, lips like crimson flowers, a voice that was the sweetest love-song, a dark secret in her life, and whose lover, the Marquis of Fairfield, with one hand pressed to his side, to still his fierce heart-throbs, cried out:

"I will look into her deep, clear eyes and fair beautiful face once more, I will touch her soft hand, shall hear her speak my name, then I will go away from her forever!"

To-day a blade of grass is a blade of grass. To-morrow it is eaten by the ox of the field, absorbed by the blood-vessels, carried to liver, carried to heart, to lungs, to heart again, deposited by capillaries where most needed and straight-way becomes *ox*.

Thus it came to pass that Heloise looked like a picture in a magazine and not like her sisters, stoop-shouldered, red-handed, their complexions ruined by fried things; nor her awkward, overgrown brothers; and it also came to pass that a dream smouldered behind her eyes, and the love of pretty clothes and soft surroundings beat in her in place of a heart, and she studied the advertisements in the back of periodicals, as her father studied his almanac. Grafted on her native beauty, her simplicity and her gentleness was that burning longing "for something better than she had known"—as if the Nebraska that formed her had cast her for an experimental rôle.

When she was eighteen, a city-bred, married niece of her father's had visited them and had carried the girl off with her. And this was how it happened Heloise was domiciled with Cousin Leonora, three "flights" up in a south-side apartment house, which at the same time was the home of one green-grocer, a dentist and family, two electricians and wives, a plumber, a bricklayer, and a widow who took "roomers."

II

The household of Cousin Leonora numbered four, the lady herself, a so-

phisticated, high-school daughter, fifteen years old, a son, a year younger, office-boy for a broker down town, and a red-eyed husband, whose duties as night-clerk at a cheap hotel, made him, as his wife variously phrased it, "disagreeable, quarrelsome, and hard to get along with," during the daytime.

Their quarrels usually occurred at supper—the only meal which the head of the house took in the bosom of his family. The presence of Heloise made no difference. She was one of the family.

Scene — Dining room, (also the kitchen.) A gas range, with the gas turned off, and the top adorned with empty frying pans, in which the chops were fried, and the stew pans which held the potatoes. Supper table sketchedly laid, placed in center of room, under sizzling gas jet. Household discovered at supper.

COUSIN LEONORA, (*at head of table attired in faded pink dressing-sacque*)—James, I wish you'd settle with the milk man. He was in the worst temper this morning! Oh! I was actually afraid of him.

JAMES, (*immersed in evening paper and gloating over the news that Jeff has at last deigned to "fight again"*)—Hm! Whadabout?

COUSIN L., (*with emphasis*)—About his bill. He said it had to be paid. And he said if he couldn't get the money himself, he knew somebody that could!

JAMES, (*Still absorbed in sporting page and running his eye over the various attractions at the race-track.*) Hm! (*Flings down paper and attacks chops and potatoes now grown cold.*) Didn't I—? Didn't I give you \$5.00 last week? What's become of it?

COUSIN L.—Five dollars! Five dollars last week! Why don't you say the five dollars you gave me last year? How far do you think five dollars can go? How many do you expect me to pay out of five dollars? The grocer, the butcher, the baker, the—

JAMES, (*thunderously.*) I expected you to pay the milk man! And why haven't you done it?

COUSIN L., *Because—*

JAMES, *Because!* Don't I know? Because you've spent it for some d—n fine

red-silk petticoat or open-work waist or ostrich-feather boa! Great Caesar's ghost, how can a man "get on," with such a wife? How can he do anything?

"Aw—cut it!" the office boy would advise disrespectfully.

But his father, striding into the next room would, after a vehement search, unearth his coat, get into it, pull his hat over his eyes, open the door wide, slam it behind him and tramp vindictively, as if urged by his just anger, down the stairs.

Then Cousin Leonora, clenching a pudgy white hand: "The coarse brute! If it weren't for the children I'd leave him to-morrow! I don't care if I did get that white messaline waist with that money. I needed it. If he says anything more I'll ask him how many cigars—"

"Say, ma," would interrupt the high-school daughter, "I've got to go down to the lib. after a book to write a comp. on the Conquest of Granada or something. Come with me, Heloise, can't you? Don't stop to comb your hair. 'Comb the hair after dark, comb sorrow to the heart!'"

The girls would go out and there would be cars and lights and the streets alive as at noon-time, with jostling crowds on their way to the theatres.

The shops would present a perpetual series of temptations. Jeweler's windows, prismatic with bangles, pendants, opals, emeralds, rubies, diamonds; florists' windows, dusky with fern and passionate red carnations, drug-stores and pyramids of perfume; in the lower windows of department stores, elaborate evening cloaks and gowns, "creations" of lace and silk, wildernesses of tender hued waists, wildernesses of French *lingerie*, wildernesses of fabrics, cashmeres, silks, white-velvets, red-satins, all the jingling, glittering, sweet-odored things, coveted by the daughters of Eve since the first cave belle painted her face with red clay, strung her necklace of bear's claws, and set all the males of the tribe brandishing clubs over her.

Heloise and Ethel stood on the sidewalk under the printed legend, "*Mme. Isopel, Palmist and Card Reader; Ladies, 25c. Gents, 50c.*"



Heloise sold hats

"Come on," Ethel urged. "Coggy Day and I had ours told here last Sunday eve, and she said we'd be married within the year. Let's hear what she'll tell you."

They were ushered into an ill-lighted room, made to seem mysterious with many curtains of dingy red rugs. A large woman in a tinsel-decked dress, her face swathed in veils, occupied a high backed chair before a small marble-topped table. Only her eyes, under penciled eye-brows and with many wrinkles around them, looked out at her young visitors, like the Eyes of Experience.

"She wants her fortune told," said Ethel, indicating her cousin. The woman took Heloise's fingers within her own large, heavy, and not particularly white hand.

"Your face is your fortune," she announced in a deep contralto. "You will marry a millionaire."

III

Sunday evening a week later, Heloise, Ethel and "Coggy" Day on their way home from a day at a "summer park" stopped off at one of the most ornate hotels in the city for the purpose of listening to the half-hour of music in the palm-room.

The orchestra was in the middle of "Schubert's Serenade." An atmosphere engulfed them, suggestive of a hot house, heated, charged with perfumes, satchets and expensive cigaret smoke. From the blue dome over-head, built to represent the vaulted heavens when the stars are out, myriads of electric lights shed a soft effulgence over everything: the carpets, the deep chairs, the tapestry divans, the palms and flowers and tabourets and men and women, lolling about and listening to the after-dinner music.

"There are some chairs over by that pillar," whispered Ethel. A woman put up a lorgnette; two pink youths, a tabouret between them adorned with ash trays containing the stumps of many cigarets, raised their heads in sleepy insolence.

"Look like a couple of stuffed guinea pigs," commenced Coggy, seating himself on the edge of a chair. "We've got as

good a right here as they have, I guess."

Near them was a woman in cloth of gold. Another, in banana-cream and a black hat, sat on a divan under a palm—among whose branches flowered little electric lights, like fruit of the Tree of Knowledge—and never raised her eyes from the book she was reading. In a corner a man and a girl flirted; she was in white, much embroidered; and she was pretty enough and apparently malicious enough to stir up envy and hatred and malice and uncharitableness.

A diamonded duenna, in black with three chains, had about her a little court of her own—one bald-headed, red-faced man, one 200-pound by five-foot red-faced man, and one limping, red-faced man. Their talk, not too subdued, was of caviar and terrapin, crabflake *au gratin* and broiled lobsters.

The music was of the kind that goes to the head like the odor of musk.

"Gracious, how stuffy it is in here," murmured Ethel. "Don't you think so, Heloise? Come out of your trance."

Heloise started as if her Nebraska soul had been recalled from a far-off flight.

"I don't ever want to go away from here," she sighed.

"Why, what's there to it?" demanded Coggy. "I call it slow. The park, if you want something doing."

Around a corner of a screen of palms strolled a man looking for a chair. He was tall, with light fine hair and an immobile, white, handsome face; the distinction of his evening clothes spoke of New York and London.

Ethel pinched her cousin's arm hard. "There," she said. "Your millionaire. That's him. Gee, what a swell! Apollo Belvedere in a dress suit. Look, Heloise!"

Heloise was looking.

He was of the type to which are drawn all good things, merely it would seem, because they are never desired overmuch; the type from which speculators, gamblers, politicians, and the original kings of the earth are recruited; the type that is always wise in its loves and lets other persons love too well. By their thick white hands, heavy-lidded eyes and knowing smile ye shall know them and—let them alone!

But Steele & Striker's girls are not taken on for their knowledge of character and physiognomy and psychology.

Heloise looked at him and she wanted him as eagerly and illogically and insistently as she had ever wanted a diamond necklace in a show case, a six-cylinder automobile or an Irish point-lace dress. She watched him as he seated himself leisurely and drew forth a diamond-studded cigaret case.

"And a vanity box!" murmured Ethel with assumed sarcasm.

But Coggy from the deeps of masculine experience threw a side-light on the matter.

"Naw," he asserted. "He never got that for himself. Some woman bought that for him!"

"Some woman?" Heloise winced.

It was at this instant the young man across the way lifted his heavy-lidded eyes and regarded his critics through a haze of cigaret smoke. For Ethel and Coggy his expression indicated as much interest as the chairs they sat in; but for Heloise his eyes suddenly contracted. He paid her the compliment of letting his cigaret waste between his fingers a full half-minute while he looked at her.

"He'll know you the next time he sees you, Heloise," hissed Coggy with biting humor. "Haven't we had about enough of this? Let's go out."

"Oh, not yet," protested Ethel, but Coggy was on his feet and stalking out of the room, the girls reluctantly following.

"He watched you all the way out, Heloise," assured Ethel, who had been using her eyes. "You ought to have dropped your purse or handkerchief or something and given him a chance."

IV

Next evening as she was returning home from work, he of the palm room pulled Heloise from beneath the hoofs of a pair of dray-horses. It was at that crossing where cars from three directions debouch; passengers and delivery wagons and laundry wagons and taxi-cabs and trucks succeed each other at intervals of every five seconds, and it is misty

with gasoline and slippery as the road to perdition. How she came to be caught, and "turned around" in the thick of it, a Japanese kimono of pale blue tissue and silver embroidery, hanging in a window behind her, might have answered, but how she was dragged out of it and deposited in safety upon the pavement must always remain a mystery, even to eye-witnesses.

As for Heloise, herself, she only became conscious when she looked up into the eyes of her rescuer. She thought if she had not fainted before, she surely must faint then.

"You!" she cried.

He wore an expensive fur-lined overcoat above which his face rose pale and aristocratic. For the fraction of a second he did not recall her; then, a consciousness of the emphasis in her voice brought a slow, quizzical smile to his eyes, that restored Heloise suddenly—she did not know why—like a little dash of cold water in the face.

"And—you," he echoed.

They stood there in the street while the hurrying, home-going throngs rushed past them, brushing and pressing against them. Someone came out of a delicatessen store opposite and the odors of cooked things—warm bread and beans and meats—flirted against Heloise's nostrils, making her a little faint. She had lunched on tea and wafers.

"I must be going," she said, recovering herself. "I—I—don't know how to thank you for what you did. Good-by."

Against the murk in which the afternoon was fading she was so pale that her hair seemed black and her lips a dark red. He looked down at her. "You'd better let me get you a cab," he suggested. "You can hardly stand." She shook her head.

"Then let me put you on your car. Which is yours?"

They waited for it. It came, overflowing with struggling humanity. He helped her aboard it, his hand at her elbow. There was hardly standing-room.

"I feel somewhat responsible for you," he said. "I didn't save you from the dray-horses to have you topple over in a faint or get crushed to death in this mob. If you don't object, I'll stay on, till I



"You will marry a millionaire"

think you are at least capable of making a struggle."

They were crushed against the knees of two fat men with newspapers before their faces.

"Do you have to stand this every evening?"

"—and morning," answered Heloise tremulously.

The crowd surged about them and he steadied her, his hand at her elbow. His nearness and the fact that he was concerned for her safety was more upsetting than any escape from death.

"Always take the same way home?" he asked presently.

"Yes," she answered.

The conductor called a street and some man got up to leave; he hurried her into the vacant seat.

"Before I leave you," he said, looking down on her with a slight smile, "I want

you to promise me you will not slip under the feet of any more dray horses. I hope you will oblige me. Good-by."

He raised his hat and pushed his way out of the crowded car. The next moment it started and Heloise twisted her neck and pressed her face against the window, straining her eyes for a last glimpse of him—but he was lost among the hordes of the rush-hour.

She reached the apartment house and ran breathlessly up the dark, dingy stairway, urged on by a sense of elation that would have propelled her without fatigue, she felt, to the top of the highest building in town.

Cousin Leonora opened the door for her, and she was straightway enveloped in a flood of light, warmth and cooking odors. Leonora had on an old silk sack and about her thirty-two inch waist was tied a gingham apron.



"There's your millionaire"

"I was afraid you was going to be late, Heloise," was her greeting. "We've got steak and hot biscuits."

Heloise looked up dazedly, as if her good cousin had said the waters of the Atlantic had rolled back.

The following morning, as she was dressing, Heloise started to put on her shirt waist wrong-side out. In Babylon, Nebraska, where she had been brought up and grown to womanhood, it is a law immutable as the law of gravitation, and a good deal better known, that if you start to put on a garment wrong-side out, you will be disappointed. Therefore, Heloise knew she was to be disappointed. It was such a flimsy little *lingerie* shirt-waist though—white lawn and machine tucks and val. lace; and for such a slight to so small a thing, to be meted out disappointment for one, five, seven days, as the children count!

She loitered along that portion of the street between the "Store" and the crossing until she grew afraid the policeman would command her to move on. She made excuses for stopping to examine the wares of art stores, candy shops, jewelry displays. A foot-step behind her would set her heart beating wildly.

It was one evening when she was passing a florist's shop, without a thought of seeing him, that he opened the glass doors leisurely and came out and joined her. They walked down the street together.

"I've been down-country a few days," he told her. "How have you been?"

She choked a little. "Oh, I am always all right," she managed to say. She trembled in the raw Spring air.

"Cold?"

"Oh, no, not a bit—now."

V

In all the walks they afterwards took together during the days remaining in that slushy March she could not recall that he ever once made love to her. Once when the exertions of the day had left rather unusual traces of fatigue upon her face, he had taken her to a tea-room for a cup of tea. Once and once only (on an afternoon bestowed upon her as a half-holiday) they had ridden out to the Park. It had been a day of enlivening sunshine. They had looked at the trees coming into leaf and watched some men laying down new sod in rectangular patches. The Drive was lively with the jingle of harness trappings and the "honks" of automobiles. Women, in open carriages, drove by, taking the air in the glory of spring toilets of mauve and gray.

At one end Heloise and her escort met a victoria. It passed so close she could see the lady in it had a most high-held chin and a hat that must have cost at least seventy-five dollars. Her disdainful eyes had swept carelessly over the girl, but at the sight of her companion her lips parted in startled surprise and she made a motion as if to stop the carriage.

Heloise had once been with Steele & Striker's highest salaried salesman on a boat excursion, when they had come face to face with the school-teacher the said salesman was "going with." She was, therefore, quite prepared for whatever the etiquette of the situation called for; also for any change in her escort, even to his bidding her stay where she was, while he apologized for being with her.

But the man at her side was returning the lady's disturbed glance of recognition with the same imperturbable half-smile with which he had so often returned Heloise's. To a bend of the head from the carriage he gravely raised his hat. He offered no explanation to Heloise, as he had offered none that first day he joined her in front of the florist's. They went over and seated themselves on one of the benches.

"May I smoke?" he asked.

Yet the way he looked at her sometimes made Heloise burn, and his smile was—what? She could not think.

"You are much better-looking, Heloise," easy-going Cousin Leonora assured her one evening, "since there is color in your face. You used to be so pale. I got a letter from your mother, to-day. She said you had not written for over three weeks and she wanted to know whether you was sick or out of work or something. Here's a couple of lines she told me to hand over to you."

Heloise took the pencil-written scrawl guiltily.

"I was intending to write, but put it off," she said.

She had forgotten she had ever lived on that Nebraska farm.

In her bed-room later, she read her mother's letter as if it had been written to another girl.

Ned Miller has typhoid fever
Tom White has bought the old Farnham place The girls and me sewed thirty pounds of carpet rugs.

What were these things to her now? Only the last paragraph smote her:

Well, it is now ten by the clock and everybody else is in bed and we are still getting up at four. I guess I had better close. Now don't work too hard and be a good girl. It always pays in the end.
Your loving mother.

A week later she sat in the same room reading over and over something very different—a single line.

"Be at the W. Park entrance to-morrow at four." A boy in uniform had handed the note to her when she was getting on the car that evening on the way home.

"De Duke of Abruzzi er Teddy Roosevelt, Jr.," he had said pertly, "tole me ter give dis to a young lady dressed in black—medium height, good looker and wid a bunch of vi'lets pinned outside her coat. I guess yer de goods—what?"

Heloise had taken the envelope as the car started. Standing, she had torn it open and read the one line it contained before giving the conductor her fare. There was neither address nor signature, for he had no more asked her name than he had told her his. The paper was monogrammed, however, "H. T." Heloise wondered what "H" stood for.

She wondered again when again she

examined the note in her room. "Was it Horace, Howard or Harold?"

In the adjoining sitting-room Cousin Leonora was entertaining the electrician's wife. The door was closed, but Heloise could hear: "Wednesday night she didn't come home and her mother thought maybe she'd stayed all night with some of the girls; but when Thursday night came and she didn't—Hogan went down to investigate at the store. She hadn't been there for two days and she hadn't drawn the pay that was coming to her. A waiter in the restaurant, where she always had her lunch, said he met her Wednesday noon coming out of a downtown jewelry store with a tall, dark man in an automobile coat."

Heloise's cheeks suddenly burned. The rustling of paper made her conscious of the note she had thrust for safe-keeping into the folds of her shirt-waist. Her thoughts flew away to the parks, as they must appear this raw, April night—wet and wild, though within a stone's throw of lighted streets, noisily running street cars and jostling throngs of people—their paths leading away, dim and mysterious.

VI

At half past four the next afternoon she stood with him on the path bordering that portion of the park called the "meadow," where later in the season sheep would be permitted to graze, and over the well-kept surface of which was now appearing a faint green blush.

Some sparrows wrangled on the walk; farther back under the trees, gardeners were burning heaps of old leaves and dead brush, and a policeman regarded them indifferently. They took the sloping path down to the "stepping stones."

"This cannot be a very long walk," he said to her regretfully. "I have an appointment at six. Then," he added, casually, "I'm off for New York to-morrow."

Heloise stood still, her heart dropping sickeningly to unplumbed depths. She could not speak for what seemed to her a long time.

"To—to stay?" she managed finally.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Yes, no—I'm a sort of a bird of passage, I'm afraid. I'm never very long anywhere. From New York I'll probably go on to London and from London to Paris—Cairo—the ends of the earth."

She shivered in the bitter Spring air; her black-panama tailored-suit had the correct cut, but was not designed especially for warmth. He looked down on her.

"You are cold," he said, solicitously. "I should not have brought you so far."

They had come to a little spot secluded by trees from the eyes of the curious. He stopped and drew out his watch.

"5:30," he said. "It is later than I thought. Shall we say good-by here, and aren't you going to shake hands with me?"

They had never shaken hands before. He drew off his right glove and took her little cold, black-gloved fingers in his.

"You have never told me your name," he said.

"Heloise."

"Heloise! And I was afraid it would be Mamie or Maggie! Well, have you nothing more to say, Heloise?"

She was very cold and pale; the drops she must not let fall clung to her lashes and there was a lump in her throat.

"I—I hope you will enjoy yourself very much—in all those places you are going to," she faltered.

"Thank you." He suddenly put his free arm around her. "How would you like to go with me to—all those places?" he said.

She made a motion like a frightened bird, flashing her startled eyes into his.

"I—I—Oh, no, I couldn't," she stammered, incoherently.

He laughed a little. "Couldn't you? Well you shall not unless you want to;" but drawing her head back against his shoulder, he looked down into her face.

"Do you know you are very much of a beauty?" he said. "But you don't know that, do you? I wonder when you're married to somebody, with a good salary, let us hope, and settled somewhere in a six-room flat on Ellis Street, with a parlor upholstered in blue plush—I wonder

whether you will ever think of me?"

"I'll—I'll never be married and—I'll always think of you."

He bent his head and Heloise thought he was going to kiss her, but he did not.

"We must be going," he reminded her, smiled into her eyes and took his arm away. At the street where they separated, he put into her hands a huge bunch of violets he had purchased at the florist's on the corner and held her hand again for an instant in his.

"Good-by," he said. *"But if you should happen to change your mind, you know, be in front of Keen's to-night at 8:15."*

When she looked back after having taken a half-dozen steps, he was standing looking after her, cigaret case in hand, on his face still that challenging smile.

Heloise sped homeward, the perfume of the violets mounting to her brain. She joined the six o'clock crowd that poured incessantly from the street entrances of offices and business-places. A confusion of thoughts, impulses, desires, half-formed resolves made her oblivious of time, fellow creatures or direction.

She found herself in front of a great memorial office building, commemorating some great missionary or playwright or porkpacker, she didn't know which. Before it a group of simple sight-seers, with railroad folders in their hands, were reading the descriptive bronze tablets over the lintels:

"To follow those waters...which will henceforth lead us into strange lands!"

Realizing she had taken the wrong direction, Heloise retraced her steps. On the car, girls from the glove factory, stolid laboring men with tin buckets between their knees, dull-eyed workers, regarded her and her violets dispassionately.

At the door of the apartment she all but collided with the landlady coming out.

"Oh, excuse me, Mrs. Farrell," said Heloise. The sour-visaged proprietress stepped back.

"Gettin' home rather late, aint you?" she inquired, her eyes focusing suspiciously on the violets.

"It don't matter though, to-night, I guess. You'd have had to eat your supper alone, anyway. Your cousin's husband left for his hotel two hours ago and she and the kids have gone 'out.'"

In the one-power candle-light of the hall gas-jet, Heloise went suddenly very pale.

"Out," she said in a low voice, "where?"

"Oh, to some doin's at Ethel's high-school. Your cousin said to tell you she'd be back at nine."

The landlady, who had been holding the door open all this time, suddenly slammed it behind her, and the girl heard her go down the steps.

On the second stair-landing, Heloise stopped in the dark, pressing her bunch of violets against her violently beating heart. Wild disorder reigned in the sitting room, she saw when she lighted the gas. The shades were up, papers were strung over the carpet, a pile of Ethel's high-school books and note books were dumped on the sofa and Cousin Leonora's pink silk dressing-sacque hung over the back of a chair.

Heloise sat down, in her hat and jacket, and stared at it fixedly for ten minutes. She was roused by the memory of that moment in the park when he had almost kissed her. The hot blood stung her cheeks again and her ears burned like fire. She recollected that the last was a sign someone was talking about her.

She arose abruptly and went to put her violets in water and noted that the hands of the gilt clock on the mantel marked half-past-six.

It was the supper hour. From different parts of the building came familiar sounds of chairs being pushed about and tables being laid. A fresher odor of ham and eggs replaced the older and staler one of innumerable by-gone ham and eggs.

Cousin Leonora had "set out" a lunch on the kitchen table, but Heloise's excitement had driven from her mind all thought of food.

She picked up an evening paper lying on the floor.

At a quarter-to-eight she stood in her

bedroom before the chiffonier mirror, dressed for the street, and trying the effect of half her violets pinned to the jacket of her best dark-blue suit. Her fever of an hour ago had subsided, leaving her terribly pale. She bit her lips to bring back their color, but they remained bloodless. On the wall, near the bureau, Ethel had tacked a fan of red Japanese paper. Tearing off a jagged edge, Heloise rubbed it against her lips until they were a bright, unnatural carmine and took up a hand glass to examine the result. She was putting it down again when it struck against the marble corner of the bureau top. Falling from nerveless hand, the glass splintered upon the faded carpet in a hundred pieces.

Heloise stood looking down on them. She pressed her handkerchief to her trembling lips. It came away with a red stain on it as if from the imprint of a

painted kiss. Unsteadily she passed into the sitting-room and looked upon its unlovely disorder.

Near the clock busily ticking off the seconds, was hung a little calendar. Her eyes were drawn to it as by a magnet—"Friday, 13th."

She opened the sitting-room door and leaving the gas burning, stole noiselessly down the stairs like a thief. She had walked a block almost before she discovered she held in her hand the sitting-room door key. She flung it away. She could not return it now. She had taken the leap. A new country lay before her, beautiful, terrible, unexplored—and therefore fascinating.

Just as she was hurrying past the small, unlighted grocery, something stirred in the shadow, came out, and crossed her path. It was a black cat. Heloise turned back.

Shadows of Romance

BY F. K. REHN, JR.

I

HUEY HUFF—plain-clothes man on his job—paused in his leisurely stroll along the shadow-flecked, memory-haunted walk that encloses Gramercy Square. The reason for this sudden cessation of movement, as well as a certain professional intentness of gaze—as much a part of his trade as the actor's make-up—was a large yellow auto that approached from the West like a shaft of sunlight, and rested tranquilly at the curb before the corner house—a big brick affair, white-faced with colonial trimmings and flaunting a huge brass knocker.

An elderly gentleman, immaculate in high silk hat and cutaway coat and carrying in one carefully gloved hand a large bunch of *Jacque Blanche* roses, detached himself from the auto. The glance he cast around seemed to find its ob-

jective in the person of the motionless Huey, for, accompanied by his roses, he rapidly crossed the street and extended his disengaged hand in lordly greeting.

"Mr.—eh—Huff, I believe?"

"At your service, Mr. Beardsley."

"Now, my man," continued the aristocrat, "you understand your duty?"

"Perfectly, sir," answered the imperturbable Huff.

"No one but my ward is to enter that house on any pretext whatsoever. Eh—you know my ward, Miss Lanier, by sight?"

Huey Huff inclined his head in affirmation.

"Good! The presents are in the dining-room there, which I will now light—the shades, of course, being down, you can then see the shadow of anyone who might enter it. Good-by! I'm entrusting a great deal to you, my man: if you're

successful, egad, you shall not go unrewarded."

"Never fear, sir! Huey Huff has never been known to fail."

"So I've been given to understand. Nevertheless, whoever it is that is operating in this section, he's no fool! Well—eh—good luck!"

Mr. Beardsley hurried across the street and entered the house. A few minutes later, he emerged minus his flowers, glanced at his watch, nodded to Huey Huff, and was driven rapidly away in the direction of the Grand Central Station.

Slowly the short autumnal afternoon drew to a close. The shadows of the trees stretched long across the asphalt until they reached the great house on the corner—where their huge gnarled limbs, like phantom hands, fumbled at locks and dragged at windows as if in warning derision of some impending disaster. Along the side street, the dining-room windows warmed to orange in the purpling shadow. The laughter of children died out of the square as weary feet turned home from play. And high above all this the sentinel tower of the Metropolitan Building stood, a saffron shaft against the tender blue of twilight. Save for an infrequent victoria—wraiths of a past glory—the ancient square seemed deserted.

The solitary guardian of the Beardsley mansion pulled up the collar of his coat, took from his hip-pocket a flask, and from the flask a goodly portion of its contents. As he reluctantly lowered the half-emptied receptacle from his lips, his attention was attracted by a figure slowly approaching in the wake of a lamp-lighter. The style of this figure's perambulation resembled a cross between a vagrant's shuffle and a gentleman's stroll. As the figure emerged into the glare of the lamp-lighter's last successful attempt, it resolved itself into a personage more or less widely known to the underworld of New York, as Fagan Evers—or better still, Gentleman Fag.

Fagan's brown derby was perched at its customary jaunty angle. His usual uncompromisingly red necktie glaringly supported a large-sized diamond pin.

What did not show so conspicuously in the concealing brightness of the street light, though equally noted as characteristic, was the deep blue of long lashed eyes and the reckless flare of a light blond mustache.

Fagan's career had been vagarious and circuitous, his fortunes alternately declining and ascending. He had fought with the police and against them; borrowed freely—when possible—and now that fortune had winked at him in the outward form of real estate, he lent as freely. Yet, through it all, he had remained Gentleman Fag. Who he was, or what he was, no one knew, or cared. His soubriquet had been earned for him in moments of intense excitement by a certain dropping of the vernacular of the streets and a use of language, recognized, but unknown by his associates.

The solitary guardian of Beardsley Mansion, glad of a chance to jolt the monotony of his watch, crossed the street and hailed the approaching figure.

"Hello, Evers!"

Gentleman Fag came to a halt.

"Well, by the Twenty-eighth cross-town line, if it aint Huey! Why, you old juggler of mystery, what are you desecrating the slumber of this has-been square for?"

Huey's eyes lifted significantly towards the white-barred front of the old mansion.

"That house?" ejaculated Evers. "Who's in there?"

"No one."

"No one!" echoed Fagan. "Well, are you getting dippy? What's the old shack done?—Oh, I see! It's a chip-and-merry-wheel resort, eh?"

But Huey shook his head. "Nope," he said, "it's a weddin'."

"A wedding! Well, what do you think of that! So they've got old matrimony on the blacklist at last. I knew she was getting desperately unpopular, but I didn't know she was *sub rosa*, yet."

"She was what?" asked Huey.

"*Sub rosa*—that's Yiddish for not on the level," explained Fag, and his blue eyes twinkled mischievously.

Huey regarded him solemnly.

"You're batty, Evers! Come across the

street and I'll explain. Don't want to be seen studying the microbes on the front stoop."

The two men crossed over into the gloom of the park.

"You see, it's like this," began Huey. "The old skate who owns the shack is going to marry off his ward there, tomorrow. She's a queer sort of girl—an awful good-looker, aint so young either, but she's a lady, all right. Well, of course, there's a pile of swell presents in the house, and for some reason or other the old guy sends all the servants away this afternoon, goes away himself, and leaves the place in my hands. I've got a man watching the rear. Suppose, with all them things in there, he's afraid of this here mysterious—"

"You mean the gang that's been doing all this sleight of hand play of late?" interrupted Evers.

"Yep."

"Say, do you think there's any chance of their making a play for it to-night?" asked Fagan, excitedly.

"I'm almost willin' to bet on it," answered Huff.

"Gee, you must be sure!"

"Do you know," went on Huey, abruptly changing the subject, "that old house has got quite a history. Until quite recent years, it belonged to the Varley family, whose ancestors built it in 1836. They say the last one fought a duel in that very drawing-room there, in which he killed his man—then disappeared."

He paused for a moment, and added:

"It must be kind of nice to have had your folks living in one of these houses for generations."

Gentleman Fag pursed his lips together into a mimic whistle.

"Blamed if I don't believe you're getting slushy, Huff!" he remarked. "Well, so long! Say, if I aint got anything better to do, I may come around and keep you company to-night. I'm kind of itching for some excitement."

So saying, he moved off with that peculiar shuffling gait of his, and sought the seclusion of a little restaurant where, as usual, he ate a leisurely meal, and continued onwards across Third Avenue to his rooms.

II *

The suite of rooms in a dingy faced flat, which was home to Gentleman Fag, seemed to belie the implication of his opulent office on Madison Avenue. It consisted of two medium sized rooms and a bath. In the corner of his living-room stood a large roll-top desk, enclosing a cleverly arranged system of racks, between which reposed carefully worked-out ground-plans of various houses in the vicinity. On these plans were noted in cipher the character of all the locks on the various doors and windows, also the position of all electric-light switches, servants' rooms, and similar details, accompanied by long rows of figures. The walls of the room were covered with photographs of various city blocks, in many of which appeared buildings in course of construction.

Gentleman Fag sank into a comfortable lounging chair and, with a black-briar pipe between his teeth, slipped presently into the sweetest of slumber. It was ten o'clock when he awoke, enjoyed the luxury of a bath and shave, and redressed. But not in the same clothes. The rough tweed was laid away and in its place appeared a dark gray affair of the most approved fabric and design; a quiet blue cravat, supporting a small pearl scarf-pin, replaced the garish red tie and the vulgar diamond. The upturned blond mustache was removed and placed carefully on the dresser—and finally, a black derby set at a sedately correct angle was substituted for the brown one of real estate fame.

In all this his costume differed not a whit from that of any one of a hundred of the aristocracy of the dollar, whom you may see at any time on Fifth Avenue. True, his light gray waistcoat was lined with curious looking steel implements, rather unusual even as implements go—but then, these did not show from without, and as Fagan himself said, "If we could see the inside of people, we wouldn't need the outside; for it's the inside that comes out, not the outside that goes in."

He paused for a moment and surveyed

himself in the glass. It was a searching, critical glance, but there was nothing amiss. A gentleman stared steadily back at Gentleman Fag, and, moreover, a rather handsome gentleman. Evidently satisfied, he turned down the gas, picked up a gold-headed cane and some light gray gloves, then stopped, recrossed to the desk, unlocked it and took from a small drawer a gold cigaret case of a beautiful, old-fashioned design.

A curious look overspread Gentleman Fag's face, as he slipped the bauble hastily into his pocket and went out.

Westward he walked with a clean, swinging stride in the direction of Gracey Square, but he stopped just before he reached the Square and made a detour. In front of a fire-alarm box he paused, looked hastily up and down the street, then turned the nickel lever that sent in the alarm.

III

A minute or so later, if Huey Kuff's team-mate had not been so interested in the sudden noise of a fire-engine, drawn by three powerful grays, that shattered the silence of the peaceful neighborhood, he might have seen a dark shadow slip through the iron gate in the brick-walled garden at the rear of the Beardsley Mansion. Yet so rapidly was this done, that had he seen it, he would have been apt to believe his eyes had tricked him.

Once inside the garden, it was but the work of a moment for so experienced a hand as Fagan Evers to make his way into the house. Rapidly, as one thoroughly at home amid his surroundings, he mounted the servants' stairway and went from thence to the upper hall. There he paused and listened, intently. Save for the bar of golden light which streamed from the great dining-room, the house was in utter darkness and silence. At the entrance to the dining-room Fagan stopped, dazzled by the splendor within.

On the long center-table lay great piles of silver plate, glittering in the light of the crystal chandelier that hung directly above it. Round the plate clustered masses of cut-glass carafes, decanters,

punch-bowls, vases and wine glasses, of exquisite design and workmanship; here and there was the rich gleam of gold, and ever and anon the flash of magnificent gems. Princely, indeed, was the weight that burdened the old table—the old table around which so much beauty and fame had gathered; about which so much wit and wisdom had sparkled; on which so much wine and so many tears had fallen.

Some such thoughts as these must have been passing in Gentleman Fag's mind, for a look akin to sorrow crossed his face, even as he gazed at this wealth which he had but to stretch forth his hand to possess. His eyes wandered around the walls, taking in their ancient portraits and antique decoration.

A smile flickered for an instant on his lips, as he observed the three carefully drawn window shades. The room was lighted solely by the crystal chandelier, and all he had to do was to keep from getting between that and the windows, and Huey Huff would see no shadow dull their orange glow. He smiled, but the smile was joyless, almost mechanical.

At last he turned, and crossing the hall entered the "Den." The light from the dining-room half-illuminated it, revealing to the intruder an open fire-place, in front of which stood a huge arm chair. Into this he sank and sat thus for a long time with his feet on a great tiger skin, his eyes penetrating into the furthestmost corners of the darkness.

After some time, the desire to smoke came to him.

"Wonder where the old duffer keeps his cigarets?" he muttered.

Then he perceived in the light from the dining-room a smoking table on which lay some cigarets on a copper tray. He selected one and returned to the fire-place. Facing this, with his back to the doorway, he struck a match and raised it to his cigaret. As he did so, his eyes met those of a portrait hanging above the mantel-piece. Immobile he stood, the last of the Varleys, gazing into the pictured face of his father—into deep blue eyes, long-lashed, and filled, it seemed to the son, with an ineffable sorrow.

Slowly the match burned down to his

fingers, glowed, flickered, and went out. From the darkness came the sound of a heavy sob, and a body falling back into a chair.

A long time passed. Then the man roused himself. Carefully, he picked up the neglected cigaret, replaced it on the tray and, striding out into the hall, rapidly mounted the main stairs.

An uncontrollable longing had come over him to go to his own room—the room of his Youth.

IV

The sound of his footsteps had barely died away in the upper regions of the old house, when the front door opened and a cloaked figure entered.

"No, you need not come back, Natalie," said a woman's voice. "It's only a step, and I can't tell just when I shall want you."

The door shut, leaving the cloaked figure of the woman alone in the hall. For several seconds she stood motionless, then moved slowly down the hall, the faintest of shivers shaking the folds of her cloak as she passed the tall, closed doors of the drawing-room. At the entrance of the dining-room she stopped, cast one swift glance at the table loaded with presents—then turned and entered the "Den."

There was the scratch of a match, and a muffled explosion as sudden flame wrapped the gas-logs in the fireplace, dispelling the gloom, but retaining the mystery, and revealing a far greater mystery—the mystery of Beauty. For as the woman rose to her feet, the drab cloak fell from her, displaying a gloriously brilliant figure, clad in a wedding gown of softly shimmering white, crowned with a luxuriant wealth of golden hair. Exquisitely, superbly patrician she looked, in the full bloom of her womanhood: slender as a girl, her head beautifully set on a perfectly molded neck, a throat soft and full, a mouth at once haughty and tender, a brow broad and proud, eyes deep and luminous. Well might Huey Huff say she was a "good looker" and "a lady," for Nita Lanier, patrician of patricians, had been the belle of many a

gathering of New York's fairest daughters.

Suddenly, she caught sight of a bunch of white roses on the mantel-piece. She caught them up with a little cry of delight.

"Oh, that was thoughtful of Uncle Edward!" she murmured, and sinking into the arm chair, with her feet upon the tiger skin, she buried her face in their fragrant depths—who knows what leaping visions of sweet dead days mingling with their white perfume!

Even in his retreat on the third floor, enwrapped in memories of another life—the life of Youth—Fagan Evers' keen ears had caught the sound of soft footsteps in the hall below. With the utmost caution he descended the stairs. His face was now swathed in a dark blue muffler, the gold headed cane was grasped by the ferule. Swiftly, yet silently he made his way to the door of the Den and looked in.

There was a blinding flash before his eyes; his heart gave a mad leap as the blood pounded and sang through his veins. His hand gripped the wainscoting like a vise in his effort to steady himself. Through the wave of receding surprise, he saw Nita Lanier seated in his chair, before his fire, arrayed in her bridal robes, as he had seen her in the illusion of imagination countless upon countless times. Her face was nestled in the roses, her dark eyes staring out over the tops of the flowers into the flickering flames of the logs.

Of what was she thinking?

Then in a sickening flood of remembrance the past rolled back on him. Of course! she was thinking of that other—the man he had killed, as he had killed her love for himself, in a blind moment of passion, with a single lunge of a rapier, in that front room yonder. Ah, the pity of it! Great drops of agony stood out on Gentleman Fag's brow.

The refrain of a wild song kept singing itself in his ears:

For the things that ye do
When Life is new
And your sin is sinned with a smile,
Ye shall pay full sore,
Ye men, though the score
The gods hold back for a while!

And he was paying now, in the bitterest coin a man can pay. For he understood now, that she, Nita Lanier, was Beardsley's ward, and that to-morrow was her wedding day—And he had almost robbed her of her wedding presents, as he had robbed her of the lover of her youth. And above all, he was condemned to stand there looking at her, in his own house, before his own fire, arrayed for another, and dreaming of a man he had killed—she, the love of his life, for whom he had sacrificed everything. The anguish of it was becoming unbearable. What would he not have given for one word, one glance; even a word of scorn, a glance of horror!

And yet, so strange is "this scheme of things entire," that he did not know that the man for whom he thought she grieved had been dead to her, as to the world, for fifteen years. That the reason this ancient house was deserted this night, that the reason she was there, was none other than himself—Gentleman Fag—Alfred deMarr Varley.

And she, Nita Lanier, belle of a past day, on the eve of a loveless marriage, sat motionless, burying with her own hands in the depths of the roses of Death, a love that stood waiting for her at the door.

All his youth came back to him; a flashing series of vivid pictures unrolled across the screen of his newly awakened memory. He saw the girl again, who, as a woman, now, was before him, unconscious of his gaze. He saw the lovelight in her eyes, as he saw the firelight in her hair. And he saw himself as he once had been; a lad who lived for love, in whose heart burned the fires of his cavalier ancestors, brave men and true, who had done astounding deeds of chivalry for the ladies of another day whose favors they desired.

For what seemed an eternity the man remained silently gazing at the picture within, until every little detail was irrevocably seared into his memory. Then he

tore himself away and slipped past the door to the servants' entrance. There he paused, hesitated, and entered the dining-room by the way of the pantry. Before the gilt-laden table he paused, and something slipped from his hand to the cloth—then swift as a shadow, as he had come, he fled from the house.

V

At noon the next day the old dining-room bulged with the throngs of guests. The reception was termed in the society columns "the most notable of the season." The ancient aristocracy of New York and the newer aristocracy of the Dollar trampled upon one another's feet and studied each other through scornful lorgnettes. The soft strains of music flooded the mansion. Suddenly, the bride, who was displaying her presents to some particular friends, was seen to grow strangely white, reel and sink to the floor. Great was the commotion and excitement, and those who stood nearest noted that between the white-marble fingers of the bride's left hand shone a gold cigaret case of a beautiful, old-fashioned design.

When the bride and bridegroom had driven away and the guests had departed, Mr. Beardsley summoned Huey Huff to him.

"You have done excellently, my man," said Mr. Beardsley. "It gives me great pleasure to present you with this," and he handed Huey a handsome check.

The imperturbable Huff bent his head in acknowledgement.

"Thank you," he said, "I never fail."

That was all the reward Huey Huff ever received, but the city owes him a greater one. For from that night the mysterious burglaries that had staggered the police and terrified the neighborhood, ceased—though the real estate office of Fagan Evers still does business at the old stand.

The Third Story

BY
F. WARNER ROBINSON

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON STEVENSON

YOU make your first entry into the Old Time House by accident. This is how: walk up or down Broadway till you carom off a yellow marble column rising from the middle of the sidewalk. That column, in company with several others, supports the sagging portico over the entrance of the Old Time House. Like a friend from the stone age, it turns you thus about, to direct your gaze down a long, wide, leather-chaired cave of comfort and hospitality. At the end of the vista is the clerk's desk and to the left of that, reached by a narrow corridor, is the café. But you do not get that far all at once. Drawn into this man's Eden as surely as the flame draws the moth, you wander among the heavy, old-fashioned furniture, sink to rest upon one of the soft cushions, and forget for a time that you were bent upon an errand—and that your arrival here was by accident.

One hot day in August two men were shunted from the passing throng into the cooling depths of this haven and found rest and other things therein. One of these arrived at mid-forenoon and the other earlier. In each man's face was a story—just as there is always a story that only the few can decipher. But before we consider them, let us observe the proprietor of the hotel.

For more than twenty-six years Phineas Hayes had run the Old Time House with an ease that at the age of sixty-eight had left him still fresh, and—with a skill that had carried the antiquated hostelry a long way into a modern and luxury-loving epoch—still a success. He



He wiped his narrow brow

was one of those men whom nature had coated with a veneer of stupidity that had failed to soak in. His eyes were so flat and dim of pupil they might have been spheroidic patches of gray felt pasted on a pumpkin. His short, lumpy form was a cloud of inertia reduced to the jellied state, so apparently slow and loath was he to move. Yet those flat, flaccid and colorless eyes possessed the rapid keenness of the eagle, the detail-enlarging power of a microscope, the correctness of a camera; and the information which they flashed to his brain was handled with an intelligence that put two and two together and rarely got more than four. Phineas Hayes might have made a fortune as a clairvoyant, but he had made more than that as a hotel man, thereby demonstrating that mind reading has its avocations.

He sat with his back to the front of the Old Time House in one of a row of old arm-chairs placed beneath the sagging portico. In his hand was a morning paper, but he was not reading. Above and

beyond the printed sheet his quick eye had detected a boy of perhaps twenty who had emerged from the park across the street and was coming toward him, zigzagging through the traffic of vehicles across the scorching asphalt. Phineas recognized him as Noisy Heller, one of those homeless, untrained, unbridled breeds that are like bubbles off a broth concocted from incompetency, indolence and crime. Some of him was good, but most of him was bad. Phineas knew the proportions. Prompted by a natural kindness and by a desire to save himself from petty annoyances, he had made of Heller a friend. Sometimes he had given him money and often he had fed him and furnished him with a place to sleep. The boy had been responsive and had promised some day to pay him back.

With practiced skill Heller elbowed his way across the sidewalk, and flashed before Phineas' astonished gaze an old, faded, weather-beaten five dollar bill.

"Take the fiver," he said, thrusting it at the proprietor. "I said I'd pay you back when I got the coin and I always keep my word. I knows you're a sport, but I don't want no gent to lose out when he takes a chance on me. It's good money. I guess it will help some toward what you've done for me."

And with a deft motion, Noisy jammed the bill into a waistcoat pocket of the dazed hotel man.

"I got it from an old gent what was easy pickin' in the park," he explained. "So long. See you when I'm hungry again." And he drifted away proudly into the street before Phineas awoke from his surprise.

Many men came that day to talk with Phineas Hayes and many were the subjects they touched upon. Sitting quietly beneath the portico or strolling unobtrusively about the lobby and café, he spoke gravely, gaily, as the situation demanded, giving advice here, taking it there, nodding solemn assent in response to some solid suggestion and exploding mildly at some witticism.

One there was to whom he listened with more than passing interest, and one there was to whom he spoke with more

than passing earnestness. Something of a Nestor was he that day to both.

Promptly at mid-forenoon, there collided with one of the marble columns at the entrance of the Old Time House, a strange character for that locality. He shambled awkwardly through the doorway of the hotel into the center of the lobby. There he stood for some seconds, carpet-bag and all, slowly revolving his long, lean body while his unaccustomed and bulging eyes took in the simple splendor of the place. Then, thoughtfully, he removed his rough, broad-brim straw hat and slowly wiped the perspiration from his narrow brow. His face was drawn and tired looking, and he wore an air of physical and mental depression, like a man bowed down with much labor and sorrow.

As he stood there, taking in his bearings, a porter touched his arm and pointed to the desk whereon the big register lay open, with the clerk behind it extending the ever-ready, ink-dipped pen. The ruralite ambled over to the desk and looked inquiringly at the clerk.

"Sign your name here," said the latter, thrusting the pen into the horny hand and indicating with his own well-manicured forefinger the line whereon the stranger's name was to be inscribed. The newcomer took the pen, adjusted it carefully in his clumsy fingers and then laboriously scratched a circle and two dots upon the register.

"My mark," he said simply, as he handed back the pen. "It stands for Benjamin Goode, of Janesville, New Jersey."

With a smile, the clerk wrote deftly on the register, "B. Goode," and slapped it with a blotter.

"What kind of a room do you want?" he asked, briskly, as he seized a bunch of keys and exclaimed sharply: "Front!"

"Room?" drawled Mr. Goode. "Room?—I don't want no room—only jest room enough to set down. I jest come in to rest. I've been so all-fired busy since I left Maria I'm all fagged out. I jest want a place to set and rest a spell before I start for home."

No one laughed. No one moved. A hush prevailed. Across the faces of near-



He scratched a circle
and two dots upon
the register

by habitués, whose ears were quick to detect the deceits of phraseology, and in whom humor was not lacking, there came no signs of mirth. Rather like a benediction fell the words upon a bench of mourners. They knew, and they understood. A philistine, not a wit, had come among them—and he was tired.

Then, suddenly, from nowhere in particular, appeared Phineas Hayes. Gently he touched the arm of Benjamin Goode and said "Come!" To the darkest and coolest corner of that comfort-lined cave he led him. And there, seated side by side upon a couch of Spanish leather, he sought to find the reason for that wearied look.

"Quite warm outside—cool in here—have a cigar," he began, with well-modulated hospitality.

But ignoring the proffered cigar and the hotel man's remarks, Mr. Goode looked searchingly around him and inquired:

"Where is that bee-hive?"

And then, as his wandering gaze fell upon an electric fan revolving from the

ceiling, his ear quickly detected from whence came the soft purr.

"Does sound like a bee," said Phineas. "I was raised among the apple trees myself, and I keep that old style fan as a memory chime. When I sit under it, I can still see the gabled house on the hill and the bee-hives in the orchard. It has been a long time since I ran away from home and I—"

"You ran away from home?" interrupted Mr. Goode.

From the tone of his voice and from the additional look of pain and fatigue that rushed to his face when he spoke the words, Phineas Hayes knew that he had put his finger upon the opening paragraph of the New Jersey man's Odyssey.

"Yes," said the hotel man, slowly, while his gray felt eyes studied carefully the drawn countenance before him. "Yes, I ran away from home."

"Did you ever go back again?" inquired Benjamin Goode.

There was an undisguised eagerness in his tone. He waited impatiently for the answer.

Phineas Hayes slowly unwound a part of the wrapper from his cigar, re-wound it again and moistened it with his tongue.

"Yes," he said, finally. "I went back."

The man from New Jersey suddenly slumped to his seat. All the stiffening seemed to go out of him at once, and an inarticulated sound like a groan escaped him. For some seconds he sat immovable, his manner thoughtful and melancholy.

"My boy didn't," said he, at last. "I thought he would at first and I told Maria so, but Maria, she wouldn't believe it."

"'We didn't treat him right,' she said, 'we didn't know how to manage him. It don't seem as if anybody would go off like he did, taking all the mortgage savings with him, if we'd brung him up proper.'

"'We brung him up the best we knew how,' I told her. 'We never had experience bringing up harum-scarum boys in our family. They was all good as fur back as I kin remember.'

"But Maria, she wouldn't have it so. She wouldn't be pacified.

"'You ask the minister,' she begged me. 'Tell him the whole story, an' ask him if we done right by him.'

"So I asked the minister. I told him about George from the time he was a baby, up to the night he climbed out of the attic window and went away and left us all alone, more than two year ago. I didn't say anything about the money he had taken, for I thought maybe some day he'd come back an' I didn't want any one to know he'd been a thief.

"The minister told me we had done just right by the boy—said we couldn't have treated him no better if we'd tried. If he was the kind of boy that was going to be bad, he would be bad, anyway, in spite of all we could do.

"I told Maria this, an' for a time it seemed to satisfy her. She got pacified and calm. But it didn't last long. She didn't show many bad signs in the daytime, but she used to cry nights; an' when I asked her what made her do it, she told me she didn't think our minister knew. It seemed to her, she said, that if we had brung George up different he would 'a' been different. She didn't get no satisfaction out of the fact that George was gone then, anyhow, and that it didn't make no difference how we had treated him. It was the uncertainty, she said. If we had done our best by George and then he'd turned out wrong, she wouldn't have felt so bad. But she wasn't so certain we'd done our best. It seemed to her that we had, but she wasn't sure—an' she wanted

some one—some religious person high in authority—to agree with her that we'd done all we could.

"We had heard a lot about Bishop Hopper—what a great minister and what a wise man he was. She pleaded with me to see him. We found out he lived in New York, so I took some of the savings we had and come to see him. I was down at his house to-day."

Mr. Goode suddenly stopped. A sadness heavier than any he had yet shown settled upon him. Like a man carrying a great weight upon his shoulders, he sat humped in his seat and stared grimly before him. His throat muscles worked.

"Did you see Bishop Hopper?" asked the hotel man.

For answer, Benjamin Goode took from his pocket a small card and handed it to the man with the gray felt eyes. The latter took it and read thereon these neatly engraved words:



"I got it from an old gent what was easy pickin' "

BISHOP HOPPER WILL RETURN TO HIS DIOCESE SEPTEMBER 12TH. IN HIS ABSENCE HIS DUTIES WILL BE ASSUMED BY THE REV. C. WALTER JONES, D. D.

Phineas Hayes tore the card into infinitesimal bits and hurled them into a cuspidor, while an expression that would have shocked Bishop Hopper slipped from between his tightly closed lips.

"What will you tell her?" he asked, after an interval of silence. Twice he repeated the question. And then a surprising thing happened.

The man from New Jersey stiffened as though he had been touched by a live wire. Rising to his feet, he smote his open palm upon the arm of a leather seat.

"Tell her?" asked he. "Tell her—why—why, I'll tell her what our minister told me."

And then he collapsed upon the leather cushion and gazed with dry, fixed eyes down the long corridor of the hotel to an arched circle of bright sunlight, which marked the entrance of the Old Time House.

Phineas Hayes cast the stub of his cigar from him. With a nervous movement none of his old cronies had ever seen in him, he reached into his pocket and extracted a fresh one. The hand that held the flaming match as he lit it, trembled visibly.

"Did you ever hear from the boy?" he asked, finally.

Benjamin Goode turned upon him a look in which was all the misery of the son-forsaken parent.

"Yes," he said, calmly and slowly, "I heard him and I saw him to-day. On my way from Bishop Hopper's, I passed through the park. I had gone but a few steps when I heard a voice say: 'Hello, Dad.' I turned, and there stood George. Yes, George—but, oh, how changed! He was ragged and dirty, and his face had the expression of the boys who hang around the saloon up in Janesville. He was so changed that I would not have recognized him, but I couldn't help myself from hugging him right there in the park. And he—what do you think he said? 'Ho, dad, not so swift!' and tried to squirm away from me.

"We sat on a bench and I asked him to come home with me. I told him about his mother and how she wanted him. At first he laughed, but later he seemed sorry and I thought he would go back. But he said no—said he was about to get a job and that if I'd lend him some money to buy new clothes, he'd go to work and pay me back.

"I've only got five dollars," said I, 'and I'd counted on buying your mother a new dress with that. I've got my return ticket and I'm going back to-night. Before I go, though, I thought I'd just drop into one of these shops here and buy something nice for your mother. But if you want the money, George, I'll give it to you. Your mother can wait—as she always has.'

"He took the money, and then—and then, he made a face at me.

"You're an old fool," said he. 'An easy mark. I may return the money, but I've got to get rich first.'

"And that is the way I left him. He is worse than ever. Maria will never see him again. He went—come—home."

The words seemed to have no effect on Phineas Hayes—or rather, the effect was not what might have been expected. He laughed—a soft chuckle of a laugh, that seemed to wriggle to the surface like a bubble from the bottom of a deep pool. For just a fraction of a second a spark of light, like the reflection of a sun-flashed mirror appeared in his dim, flaccid eyes. For a man whose interest a moment before had been searching and tense, the change seemed abrupt. But anyone who knew Phineas Hayes would have said he had been putting two and two together again. Also anyone who knew him would have been surprised at the words he now spoke to Benjamin Goode, as he reached over and placed a hand on that gentleman's shoulder.

"Listen," he said, "I have something to tell you. I have no desire to minimize your grief, but let me show you that it is not so bad.

"You are an old man. You have not long to live. Whatever trouble has overtaken you, remember that it cannot pursue you beyond the grave—that it cannot last with you much longer now.



He laughed a soft chuckle of a laugh

"I would like to have you consider a case worse than yours—that of a young man who must face long years of remorse for something that he did to his parents in his youth. The parents are dead and the boy can never tell them that he has repented—is sorry and would like to make their old age happy. His case is exactly the reverse of yours. He would give his life to get his parents back; you would give yours to get back your son. His sorrow is greater than yours; he has more years to live with it.

"He left home one night as did your son, taking with him his parents' savings. He shipped as cabin boy on a voyage around the world. Two years was he gone, and when he returned, his first thought was his parents. He had saved more money than he had stolen, had the amount to present to his parents and had decided to remain with them to the end of their days. Imagine how he felt on the day of his arrival in New York when he learned that his father and mother had both died the day before. He had not

written because they could not read, and the things he had meant to say were not for the scrutiny of other eyes. He had planned his return as a surprise, but the surprise had been for him, not for them.

Benjamin Goode looked at Phineas Hayes in astonishment, forgetting his own misfortune. Some words of consolation he started to utter, but the hotel man, with up-raised hands, stopped him.

"No, no," he said. "I am not the lad. My parents are both still alive. The man of whom I spoke was until to-day to me an utter stranger."

Phineas Hayes arose and walked over to the hotel newstand. There he took up a morning paper and slowly turned its pages, glancing down one column and up another, as if searching for some particular item. When he found it, he folded the paper and walked quietly down the corridor toward the hotel entrance. Before a railroad timetable rack, set in a niche in the wall, stood a young man. To him Phineas spoke.

"Around this hotel most of the time," said he, "are many newspaper men. One of them once told me that there is a thing in the newspaper business known as a human interest story. Such a story deals with the human side of facts which may be too slight in themselves to receive notice in a paper.

"Now, this item here," the hotel man thrust the folded newspaper before the other man's eyes, "this item here is what a newspaper man would term a human interest story, I presume. I was reading it this morning outside under the portico. If I am not mistaken, you read it also. And again, if I am not mistaken, the story of your life history, which you told me, was prompted by what you learned from this news item. But, my friend, when you read it, you jumped at a conclusion too hastily. I will admit that this item appears under the date line of Janesville—but there are many Janesvilles."

The man to whom Phineas Hayes

spoke was roughly clothed. Upon his face was a tan which looked as though it had been placed there by a tropical sun. He might have been a man who had recently returned from a long sea voyage. He was about twenty years of age.

"Yes," said Phineas, "there are many Janesvilles. There is one in New Jersey, there is one in Pennsylvania, there is one in—as a matter of fact, this doesn't refer to the New Jersey Janesville at all, for—well, there's your father over there."

One swift glance in the direction indicated by the hotel man's fat, chubby finger, brought a quiver to the young man's body and a cry to his throat. He started forward, but like an anchor, Phineas detained him. From a pocket of his waistcoat, the hotel man took an old, worn, weather-beaten five-dollar bill.

"Here," said he, "this belongs to him. Tell him the next time he comes to New York not to talk to those urchins in the park. They're a shrewd bunch. He is just the meat they are looking for."



"Here," said he, "this belongs to him"

Mr. Brown of the *Hildegarde*

BY BROUGHTON BRANDENBURG

Author of "Fido and the Castaways," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY P. V. E. IVORY

(See Frontispiece)

IN whanging clangor forward eight bells of the first watch of the night sounded, sharply and metallically out of harmony with the melodious rising and falling native chants issuing from the palm-thatched fisher huts on shore, and with the softly twanging guitars and wistful voices, singing white-man's love-ballads on the moon-flooded afterdeck of the big, white, pleasure cruiser swinging at anchor. The clear strokes of the bell barely had ceased before they came echoing back from the towering volcanic cliffs that land-locked the South Sea Island shelter. The repetition seemed like an insistence of the reminder of the flight of time, and of regulations, like an admonition to seamanliness to all aboard the *Hildegarde*.

Mr. Twining, the mate, turned on the bridge as he heard the youthful step of the third officer ascending the brass-railed stair, and saw his tall, lithe figure rising in profile against the melting moon.

"Good evening, Mr. Brown," said the first officer, "what are they going to do to-morrow?"

"They are going up the cliffs bird-nesting, sir."

"They are going to break their fool necks," growled the older man.

"The outline of the tour says, sir, that at Mauna-Kala, the party may witness the natives descending the cliffs to gather bird's-nests for the Chinese market, the sea-weeds of which they are composed making a soup that is the greatest of Chinese delicacies, and those of the party who care to make a descent may do so. Major Aylesingham says that when his regiment was stationed in Ceylon, mak-

ing such descents was fine sport, and if done carefully is safe sport. Some of the ladies are going."

"Umph, he *is* an extraordinary fool. Has the Old Man said who is to go with the party?"

"I am to go, sir."

The first officer laughed shortly and said:

"At Miss Kingdon's special request, I suppose?"

The younger man winced and his lips tightened as he turned away to look at the riding lights.

"Brown, listen here, boy," continued Twining, doggedly. "You are a ripping good fellow, but you have got to get over this. You are a sailor, and a mighty good one, and when you have gone to sea a few more years you will have your own ship, that I know; but that is all, old fellow. When you fall in love, try your damndest to marry the lass, but you must fall in love with a girl who will make a sailor's wife. Now, this girl—"

Twining hesitated and his listener grew even more tense as he stared, unseeing, at the phosphorescent shore-line. Twining went on:

"This girl is the handsomest thing that ever stepped aboard a ship that I was in, and she has as much sense as her daddy has money. I don't care a split of yarn for her being engaged to Aylesingham. A thing like that should never stand between two people who love each other—but, bless you, boy, you can't be to her anything more than you are, a good looking junior officer on a very navy-fied cruising steamer, whose duty—plus standing watches—demands that he be

sociable with the gilded tourists who happen to be aboard her. When they are gone you go back to your watches and your Moore's Tables and the rest of your proper business. Of course you may say it is none of my affair, but I had one of your father's ships and I would go far for his son, and you must not let this thing get along to where someone is going to be hurt. Run from the love of all women but one, says old Brundage, and, well—you understand, Brown."

"Yes, sir, I understand very well, thank you, sir," said Brown, quietly.

"Good-night, boy," and he clapped him roughly on the shoulder as he passed him to descend.

With an inward curse at the regulations which keep a man pacing the bridge, even when the ship's at dock, Brown walked over to the port bight, whence he could look aft along the well deck, and see the tall, dapper figure of Aylesingham as the Englishman leaned against the rail and sang. Before him lounged the Kingdons and a score of others. Florence Kingdon and her sister Marion were playing. The song in Aylesingham's clear tenor floated away across the waters to the cliffs and when he had ceased, the last lines came wafted back faint and softened, and but slightly blurred:

Not of rank or gold
Recks the heart's true love.

Just there the elder girl rose rather suddenly to her feet, laid down her guitar and disappeared from Brown's view behind the after superstructure. In a few minutes he heard someone singing the same song almost under her breath. The voice was very near, below, but on the other side—and strolling over he found that "someone" sitting in the shadow of the chart house on the lowest step of the bridge ladder.

Perhaps he *did* think of regulations as he paused on the top step, watching the light fluttering of the filmy scarf that lay about her shoulders, watching the blowing, curling wisps of her fair hair. But if he thought of regulations it was but once and feebly, for with a cautious glance aft and a careful swing of his eye around

the horizon that showed him nothing but the velvet purple-black land and the shimmering satin purple-blue harbor, with its streaming track of fallen moon-shine, he came slowly down the iron stairway and sat on the second step above her.

"Oh, Mr. Brown"—her feigned surprise was delicious—"is it *your* watch to-night?"

"I'm sure it should not be," he replied whimsically, "but there is no use arguing with the Old Man. They say he once set his mate ashore with a note to the nearest consul saying, 'Please send this dashed fool home. Yours, Brundage.'"

"Do all sailors grow to be like him when they are old?" she queried, with an arch hesitancy that carried the personal implication.

"When a man is ten years a captain he must get queer or he will have his ship taken away from him, and will be given a shore berth in owners' offices, or made shore officer in some desolate, fever-bitten port of call. Also what is the use of going to sea forty years and being a holder of a master's ticket if one is not allowed to do original things that make good stories to tell after one is dead?"

"When will you be a captain, Mr. Brown?"

"Well," he confessed with a certain shy boyish pride, "I've held a master's ticket these two years!"

"But you are only—" she began and paused, sorry for her lack of tact, when she saw his fine mouth tighten bitterly.

"Say it. I am only what I am, ticket or no ticket."

"No, I did not mean that, and also it is wrong for you to feel that way. Have you failed in your profession?"

"No."

"Of course you have not, then why rail? And since I believe that you will not be harmed by a little praise I am going to tell you what the captain said at dinner to-night. He said, first, that your father was a splendid, handsome, upstanding man, one of the finest sailors that ever took a sight; that he was a thorough gentleman of the old line of masters—and then he said that you were the most promising junior in the fleet—

and—and—that you were very like your father."

"Umph—thank you," said the young officer a bit ungraciously, but in the shadow of the deck house he grew rosy with pleasure. Thereupon a little silence fell—a silence that had a strain in it, for she had seen his eyes bent on her face with a certain restrained yearning that sent her heart thumping. Then, clearly as though uttered at the cruiser's side, came the

Pau me lala na-mauna kaa
Pau me lo lohala maa-a

of a splendid baritone among the fishermen, followed by the thrilling harmony of the chorus of all the singers, rich and mellow with the flavor of a pathos as fugitive as when one catches the reminiscent odor of violets of another century in some maiden's heirloom casket of old laces.

The young sailor repeated the liberal translation of the final line—

"Girl love, light my sea with thine eyes to our land."

She heard the sharp click of his teeth and the indrawn breath of pained repression as he turned away his head. She read him with a long slow glance as the singers took up the strain once more, and would have sighed deeply, but, as women do, she shivered and leaned toward him a very little. He was watching the huts on shore now.

"Once I wondered how good men could ever 'go to the beach,' and as old Brundage says concerning beach-combers, 'Allow a brown woman to gather my coconuts and fill my pipe,' but some day—"

"Some day *after* you are captain, you may 'go to the beach,'" she broke in with a tone so serious that he turned back to her. She, too, was gazing off to shore through narrowed lids as if raising the picture, "because there you will have poverty without pain and envy, and love for love's sake alone, without let or hindrance from anyone for the two that love."

He uttered a half oath under his breath and, startled and incredulous, demanded almost fiercely:

"Do *you* understand that? Where did you read it or hear it?"

"I know—yes, know is the word—what you—what that feeling is."

"But *you* have everything in life; you have no reason to understand that feeling. But forgive me, there is no greater presumption than to measure another's soul."

"Not if it is willing to be disclosed," she replied gently and tremulously, her finger tips barely touching his sleeve.

He dreaded lest she should feel him tremble in his misery.

"Now, I am going farther. I let you see that bit of my mind-realm that you might listen patiently to what I have wanted to say to you. It has seemed to me, many times in these weeks, that I have been able to think with you in things that you have never uttered—till tonight. I give you no reason for asking—and please, please seek none, but I urge you to go on without wavering or turning aside, to-morrow and forever, even though you find never one day's happiness in all your life."

"I have had—some days and some nights—"

"Will you go on?" she persisted.

He turned full toward her and the light in his eyes frightened her so that she drew away from him and childishly thrust her hands behind her, thinking wildly of some means to stay the words he was about to utter—the things she did not want to hear—the things he must not say.

A long shadow fell past the deck house. Major Aylesingham came treading on its heels. His glance fell on them, so intimately placed in the shadowed niche, but he barely checked his step. The young ship's officer, his blood on fire, rose semi-defiantly.

"Hallo," said the major with disarming nonchalance, "I wonder if those fellows over there are going to keep up that beastly chant all night."

"Mr. Brown has translated some of it for me," said the girl, nervously running her finger tips down the length of her scarf, "and it is very beautiful."

"How interesting!" The sneer in Aylesingham's tone was plain. "You

sailors have excellent opportunities in your wandering, unsettled life of picking up odd things and becoming intimate with the black and the yellow and brown. I quite envy you."

Brown clenched his hands helplessly and the major, satisfied that he had scored, offered the girl his arm—which she took readily—and led her aft with an air of possession that left the sailor with his heart hot and bitter within him. As they turned the corner of the deck house, the girl stood outlined gloriously in the moonlight, and she looked back as if to make the "good-night" she had not uttered. The radiance of her face was aureoled in the moon-touched, floating, curls and—then she was gone.

With a sudden thrust Brown extended his arms madly, impulsively, to the spot where she had paused, then dropped them to his side, turned and went slowly up to the bridge. Lounging in the bight he looked long at the shore-lights, watching them go out one by one, hearing the singing die away, voice by voice, and at last he said slowly and firmly:

"It is hard—the hardest thing I ever did; but there is nothing else to do—I—give-you-up."

It was mid-afternoon when the party that had gone ashore finished scouting through the village and exploring the curio chests in the huts that made up the emporium of Cheng Yan Wong, the old Chinese who dealt in the bird's nests gathered by the islanders of this small archipelago. Leaving the village they started on the long roundabout inland ascent which should land them at the top of the western cliffs over which venturesome tourists might make descents to the ledges and caves where the bird's nests were to be found.

The lithe, supple, Kanakas—the guides and rope men—held the lead easily, though carrying the ropes, the hampers of lunch and the other paraphernalia of the outing. On the very summit of the rocks, under a great slab, the stewards spread the luncheon while the Kanakas were busy at the edge of the basaltic precipices preparing for the descent.

On the cruiser, the night before, there had been twelve who had enlisted to go, but only ten had come, and four of these had turned back at the first stage of the difficult climb, leaving Kerrie, the young doctor, and his hunting-bred wife, Florence and Marion Kingdon, Major Aylesingham and Mr. Brown.

Not once during the day had the young officer allowed his eyes to meet those that had rested on him so compellingly the night before. He was keeping rigidly the vow he had made to the discreet night, and clung to Marion Kingdon's side as if fearful of misfortune if he left it. If he had looked once at Florence's face he would have found there a solemn, grieved, hurt, and withal, puzzled air, even as she talked gently with the devoted Aylesingham.

It was only a small thing, but it was significant that, when the lowering gear and the nest hunters were ready, it was to Brown the headman came to make his announcement.

Perhaps Aylesingham felt the usurpation of his leadership but, he and Florence having returned that moment from watching the afternoon storm gathering far out at sea, he was near and said:

"It is a little better perhaps—ah—if I go down first, Mr. Brown, you know, and Miss Kingdon—ah—rather fancies the idea of being the first of the ladies."

Brown bent his head a trifle and without a glance toward Florence turned away with the headman.

She watched his stalwart figure in his white uniform, swinging along beside the massive, bandy-legged brown man, with a quiver of pain in her eyes and lips, for she was sorry. To Aylesingham it was a bit ruffling to see her feeling in the matter so frankly shown, but she turned to him with an arch tenderness a moment later that swept away his vague fears, as the light morning wind brooms the mist before the shining face of the rising sun.

At the brink Brown found four heavy stakes staunchly set in crevices in the rocks, supporting a bamboo roller on timbers thrust out over the edge, to prevent friction on the line in raising or lowering. A little way inland were other



Florence Kingdon and her sister, Marion, were playing

stakes, used as bitts are used aboard ship, to check or make fast the line. Sweeping the edge of the cliffs with his eye Brown saw that at stated distances there were other clumps of stakes and rollers which gave access to other sets of ledges and caves.

This point was more than two hundred feet higher than some, and certainly at least fifty feet higher than the nearest. The cordage was of native fibre woven with extreme care and showed not a fret or break, though it was not new. Brown examined every foot of it closely and every strand and knot of the cradle of double loops used to lower the ladies.

He smiled in a pleased manner over the simplicity and strength of the devices. The headman flashed back an understanding of that smile and told Brown to kneel beside him at the brink. Mrs. Kerrie, despite her hunt-breeding, gave a little mouse-like scream when she saw them leaning over.

The Kanaka poised and dropped a big pebble. It sped straight down, a white dot in the sunshine, and struck the water twenty feet from the strip of sandy beach. Once perhaps the cliff had been perpendicular but the sea and wind in eon-long erosive attack had cut it away so that it overhung.

Down its faces Brown could see ledges, nooks and myriads of gyrating, swooping or reposing birds. Not far below was the first shelf, and to this the headman said he would send his son, so that when the whites had gone down to the level of a particular shelf on which he wished to land them—one about three hundred feet from the top and two hundred feet from the bottom—the youth could seize the rope, and, pulling on it to effect a pendulum-like motion, swing the human weight in, to land on the shelf.

At last Brown nodded. He could find no fault. Perfectly done, there was no danger in this venture. Wrongly done it was swift and certain death. In between lies sport.

Now, being the heaviest of all on the cliff top, the headman called musically to his men to lower him as a test for the line. The roller hummed and squealed as he shot down, down, down, until Brown, kneeling at the brink, saw the top of a wave five hundred feet below splash against the man's body. He felt a touch on his shoulder. Florence Kingdon stood there, steadying herself as she peered down the dizzy abyss.

In three relays of a half-dozen men each, the brawny young islanders caught the line and ran twenty or more yards inland—then ran back to take another hold. The old man came up almost as quickly as he had gone down. It seemed but a few seconds before he came over the brink, smiling. His body and his matted girdle were still wet with the sea.

Now his place was taken by the tallest and brawniest of the young men, obviously his son, who was to cause the human pendulum to swing, and as he slipped over the edge of the rocks he waved his hand blithely, and, in a laughing way, began to sing. It seemed to the sailor that this was the very wonderful barytone he had heard the night before on shore.

Ma lana-kau-ray lolo Mauna-Na

he chanted and the young men answered:

Mauna-Na ee ray
Hau-ama Hau-ama
Lei-lana lo.

Florence, still at Brown's side, heard the beautiful minor melody of the chorus as it rose to a final major chord that was almost a shout. So full of wild abandon was it, as down the wind-swept rocks it echoed, that she shivered and asked in a hushed voice:

"It is something weird and dreadful; what do they sing?"

Brown looked full at her face for the first time and his smile was hard and bitter as he translated freely:

My mother sea, my father earth
Call sister wind and brother sun
To blind death-spirits everyone
While I go by their door.

"O-oh!" gasped the girl and shrank back from the brink. "I am sorry you told me."

By this time the headman's son had reached the lower shelf and Aylesingham was going over. Brown watched the roller narrowly till he saw the mark the old man had put on the fibre with a yellow rotten-stone and thus he knew that the major was at the level of the ledge on which they were to land. Peering over he could see the line swinging and saw Aylesingham carried neatly to the ledge.

Up came the line with a whirr and he helped the old Kanaka place Florence securely in the cradle, raised her over the brink, and smiling to hide the pain of his nearness to her and the seriousness of his warning, he said:

"Be still and careful."

With his heart in his throat he helped lower away till she was well started on the descent and then he knelt, watching every lurch, every quiver, every swing till she was swept in to the ledge and caught in Aylesingham's arms. Where the two now stood they were two moving dots on a white irregular ribbon along the face of the precipice.

The doctor having taken one hasty look over the brink had gone into a complete funk, ostensibly on his wife's account, and absolutely forbade her to descend. Marion Kingdon had complained of a headache earlier in the day and now was reeling with dizziness. Mrs. Kerrie persuaded her not to attempt the descent.

Brown turned away with a boyish grimace to the waiting Kanakas and seating himself as if in a bo'sun's cradle waved to the headman to lower away.

With a curious feeling, something similar to that of the aeronaut, he watched the things below come nearer. He saw the white pinioned sea birds sweeping and wheeling below him uttering their plaintive, cat-like cries. He dropped by the ledge on which the headman's son stood smiling and still singing, and the youth cast out the loop he used to oscillate the line. Then all the sailor's vision was bent on the two eyes that, from being mere points in an exquisite miniature face, drew rapidly nearer till they were like large dark jewels, intent on his every movement in the air. He felt the first quiver of the line when the young Kanaka drew on it, and then he swung in a little and out a little, now nearer still to the ledge and farther, still farther out, coming back with a rush that nearly carried him to the outstretched hands—but back he swept, far out over the sea amid the rushing birds, only to make a return swoop directly toward the ledge at a point between Florence and Aylesingham.

A shrill scream from above cut through the noise of the birds!

It came just as Florence grasped his sleeve ere he could set foot on the ledge. He felt a jerk, then the rope loosened and he was being dragged back over the edge, fighting to free himself from the loops that he might clutch—but something stayed him. He looked up in that instant and saw the white set face of the girl near him. She still held his sleeve scantily but the other hand she had caught into a loop.

With that same upward glance Brown saw sweeping down the air from above an avalanche of loosened rock. The ledge on which the headman's son had stood had given away. With the fragments came the sprawled-out, whirling brown body, clutching the broken line.

Brown realized in the flashing mental picture, that when the doomed thing plunged by him and reached the length of the remnant, he and perhaps the girl with him would be jerked off into space.

"Let go! Quick! Let go!"

Rapidly, hoarsely, desperately he pleaded.

"I will not," she answered between her teeth, her face drawn with straining pain. Aylesingham had sprung for footing and a hold on Brown or the rope, but he could not reach and he had not time to come around behind the girl. Now she heaved with a sudden supernatural strength and Brown, clapping his fingers into a crevice he could now reach, drew himself over the brink.

Perhaps the transit through the air had rendered the Kanaka boy unconscious, or realization had impelled him to forsake the rope. As he fell they saw the white flash of his teeth and none could say if it were the mere cast of horror or the smile of one who sang, and called the sea mother and the wind sister, and so feared not the spirits of death.

There was a rumble and splash below. Other than the rope, vagrantly dangling from the ledge, and the disturbed birds filling the air by thousands, nothing remained to bespeak the tragedy.

Aylesingham drew the exhausted sailor well back to safety and turned to the girl who had staggered against the rocks, sobbing hysterically, her eyes shut on the horrible abyss. He took her tenderly in his arms and she rested there. When his pounding heart seemed no longer ready to burst from his chest and the pains in the one over-strained arm had ceased, Brown, watching them, rose stiffly to his feet and began drawing up the dangling rope. He smiled quietly when he saw that the end that came up was wet. Looking up he could not see aught at the brink, but below he was pleased to find that the beach was in direct descent at that point from the shelf. To make sure he dropped a pebble as the headman had done and it struck in the sand at the edge of the waves.

The deep bass of the cruiser's whistle came rolling over the waters. They had seen the accident from the ship and already the steam cutter, well manned, was cleaving the water to stand by below. In the bow stood Twining, glasses in hand, and beside him was Dr. Kingdon

with binoculars glued to his eyes, turned first on Florence on the ledge and then on the others on the top of the cliff.

When he had carefully coiled and inspected the remnant of the line Brown turned to the others. For Aylesingham nothing seemed to have happened, but Florence sat on a jut of rock, her face buried in her hands. For a moment the sailor hesitated then, taking off his cap, he moved toward her along the narrow way, stopped short and said abruptly:

"Miss Kingdon, a few minutes ago you saved my life—"

She raised her face and looked at him squarely—with eyes that bore no trace of tears, weakness or fear.

"I know it," she said quietly. "I am very, very glad and I am only trying to forget what it would have been like if I had failed."

Brown halted mentally before the workings of the feminine mind. Aylesingham endeavored to appear gracious and commendatory.

"It sounds silly to thank you—" said the sailor, making another effort.

She laughed oddly.

"Following ancient rights I shall want you to be my slave henceforth," she laughed, and added rather softly, "For your own sake you should do what I have told you to do. I now *command* you to do so."

"I will—if I have another chance," he said quietly.

"What do you mean?" she asked—for his manner was sententious.

He had turned to the on-coming boat and did not answer. Off to the west the storm was growing and far, far, out he could see the changed shade of the water that told of the rising wind.

Now, a native out-rigger dug-out was putting off and was soon close alongside the cutter in conference. At last Twining, standing with legs braced, raised his megaphone and shouted:

"Alaw-fft, Mis-ter Brown. Can-you-hear-me?"

"Aye, sir."

"Are- you- all- unhurt?"

"All-safe."

"There- is- no- other- line-on-shore-

long-enough-to-reach - you- from-above- All-lines-aboard-ship-are - too - heavy to-get-up."

"I-have-a-line- that- will- reach- the-beach," answered the sailor.

When these words came floating down the windy waste the old man beside Twining dropped on his knees in a burst of gratitude.

"Very-well-I-will-stand-by," answered Twining.

Brown swept the west with a glance. The mighty storm was higher in the arc and sweeping on. He surveyed the ledge carefully for a moment and the light of conviction set in his eyes. It was as he feared, so he turned to the waiting Aylesingham and then to the girl as if making a choice.

"Really, Brown, we might very well stay here till they can contrive a line," suggested the major.

"In twenty minutes," said the sailor with clipping exactitude, as he pointed to the storm, "there will be a blow tearing and beating at this little stone shelf that would sweep us into the sea one after the other. You see there is nothing to hold to."

"Oh, trust you practical men to see impossibilities, but—ah—I suppose then that two will lower number one away, then number three will lower number two and number three must slide down the rope," commented Aylesingham, stroking his moustache with a metropolitan, imperishable gesture.

"Yes, you are right—in part."

Brown's eyes were hard and small as he looked at the other, who glanced slowly around, puzzled—then went ashore.

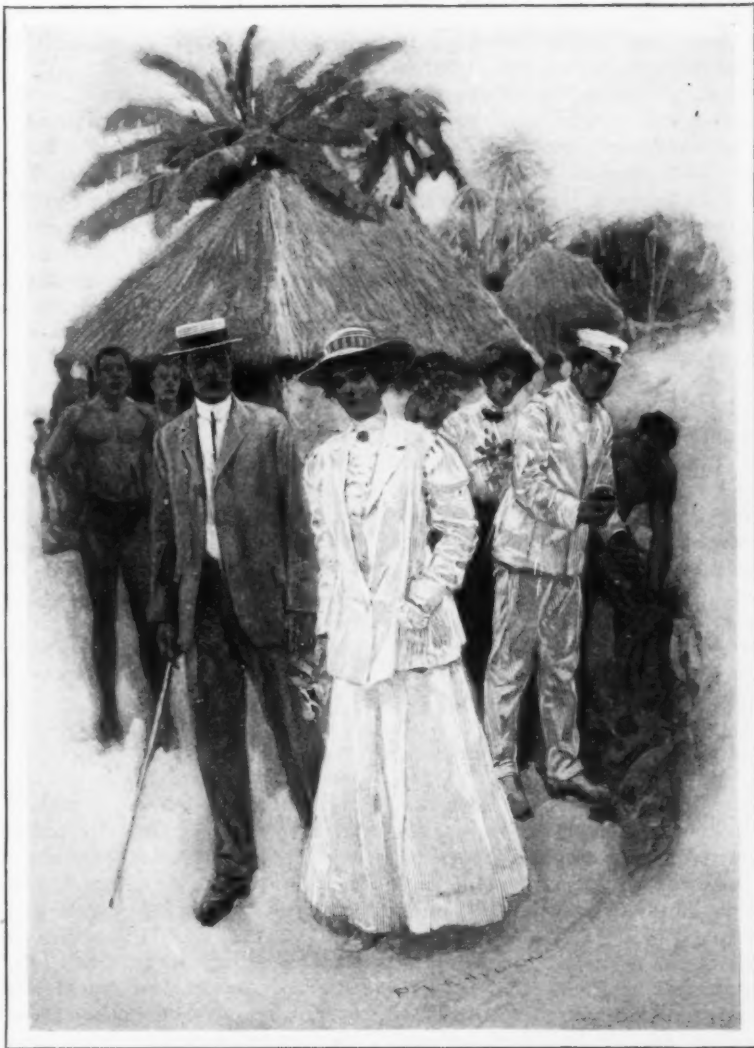
"Why—there is nothing to which to hold! There is nothing to which to fasten the rope, my boy. By—*number three stays!*"

"Yes, till the wind gets up; then number three *goes*," answered Brown, making ready the lowering cradle. Aylesingham swallowed hard; then the patrician rose.

"I suppose—we—ah—toss for it?"

He balanced a sovereign on his finger.

Suddenly the girl stood between them, her eyes lambent, her face smileless.



It was mid-afternoon when the party finished scouting through the village

"And am I, because I am a woman, to have no part in this choice?"

"No," answered the sailor gently. "There is no choice. No, Major Aylesingham, nature has settled this matter even between you and me. *The heaviest and strongest absolutely must be the last!*"

The girl thrust her face near his.

"You must stay?"

"I must. Come, come." He was gently abrupt as, laying his hand on her

shoulder, he shook her as if to dispel the daze. "Every minute is precious. Here comes the first blast now."

He lifted the loops to place them about her arms and body and then held out his hand:

"Say 'good-by' now please."

It was like the touch of steel. With quivering lips and burning eyes she faced the two men.

"Yes—say 'good-by,' I will, when I have said something more important.

For the first time in all my life I feel free. I have seen Death this day; He may stand waiting for me now, and you, brave soul, are going to him with a smile. Should I not be free and true to both of you in such a moment? Listen, Howard, I am promised to wed you and but for this afternoon I would have done so and made you a good and loving wife; but now I am about to see the man, whom I know I love better than my eternal life, go to death before my eyes. I have a right to tell him that I love him. Not only that, but if we two, Howard, come safely back to the place we call 'home,' I beg you never to see me again. Forgive me, Howard, forgive me! This must be said. There was only this moment in which to say it. There was no other way."

Aylesingham was stunned, and gazed unseeingly at the nearing storm. Brown stood uncovered, and bowed as if beneath a benediction.

"You will understand I am sure, if I ask to be lowered first and at once," said the major. Brown's eyes flashed his recognition of the other's grace and he sprang to place the ropes and lower him over.

Rapidly the rope paid out and soon stopped. Looking down Brown saw the sailors freeing Aylesingham from the loops, whereupon he staggered aside against the boulders. Then Brown began to haul up.

Suddenly the rope checked. In vain he tugged, cast off, and tried to whip loose. The rope was caught and useless.

"The-line-has-swung-in- and- caught-too-high-for-us-to-reach," came the hail from below.

Again the sailor strove but it was plain that his struggles were useless. Already the wind was coming in heavy gusts and the sea birds, wheeling and crying, were sweeping to their crannies for shelter. Slowly he turned to the girl. The inner storm spent, she was leaning back against the rock, her hands crossed behind her and her body braced against the wind. As Brown drew near she looked up to him and met his gaze gloriously.

"You do not need to tell me," she

said. "I am glad that we do not need to part in the little of life that is left to us."

Her words were almost lost in the first crash of the storm, but her arms closed about his neck and, even as the rain smote them, a rippling bolt of lightning ran down the ragged face of the precipice. Speech was impossible. He merely held her close and used his strength against the blast, feeling that it would not long avail as the typhoon grew.

Suddenly he felt something moving at his feet. The line was slipping over the edge. It was free! The wind had torn it loose. The girl saw, and understood that she had a chance of life; but shook her head in dumb agony.

Brown looked over the rim of the ledge at the boat below, desperately clawing her way out to sea and to safety, before the coming surf could crush her against the rocks. In the stern-sheets Dr. Kingdon stood upright, his lips moving without sound, his arms outstretched to the daughter he was perforce abandoning to probable death.

Then for a moment, and as suddenly as it came, the tropic storm broke into the temporary lull that was to usher in the full fury of the tempest. The boat headed back, and was frantically pulled to the beach—Twining shouting unheard directions through his megaphone. Brown turned with new hope to the girl.

"You must go," he told her, and when she refused he caught her, thrust her into the cradle, and was lowering her over, when she put up her arms, caught his face and kissed his lips and eyes, and was again about to descend, when there was a twitch on the line that had run over when left free. Was it a signal? Brown hauled on it. It was heavy! Up, up, up it came until he drew over the brink a roughly bound bundle, a sledge, a chisel, a heavy iron pin and a block and fall!

It was plain that Aylesingham had told the story and Twining had thought of the expedient. With the quick, certain movements of a cat, Brown laid Florence face down in the most sheltered spot, caught the iron pin and thrust it into the very crevice into which he had

clawed his fingers. One blow—another! It was securely home, and a few seconds served to bend on the tackle. How he blessed his sailor's training in that moment. Again he seized the girl, almost flung her into the cradle, thrust his leg and one shoulder into the meshes, and let their two bodies over the brink.

Slowly he let the rope slip till he was sure that the block ran free, then it sped more rapidly till his hands bled and his arms seemed torn from the sockets with the strain—for the wind must soon come again, and would dash them against the cliff.

Half-way down a puff struck them with gathering force. It whirled them round and round till the twist stopped their descent and they hung, beating

against the jagged basalt. Brown's eyes were blinded by the blood from the cuts on his head but he felt her free one arm to place it about his neck and there was a murmur in the tumult that told him she was speaking her soul.

It fired his flagging strength and though he could not see he began to untwist the rope by feeling—and there came another moment's lull. The rope was free again and he heard her breathing encouragements and caught one phrase, "Brave enough to die or live with you." Then he felt hands clutching them—the sand against his body—and both were lifted into the boat.

Eager hands pushed off, and they headed triumphantly seaward in the teeth of the gale.

The Diary Girl

BY EDITH RICKERT

Author of "The Coward," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY F. R. HARPER

THE situation was ridiculous! That an eminently reasonable, unromantic chap like himself should lose his head over an old picture! Lane fumed and swore; and promptly fell to mooning again. The absurd features of the case were: that he had never seen the girl; that he did not know her name or address; that, as far as he could judge, she had been young—about twenty-five years ago.

Yet she haunted him like a fantastic dream; and the longer he reflected about the extraordinary way in which her abstract personality had crossed his path, the more he resolved that her ghost would never be laid until he had found out her history.

The situation began on a day when, unable for lack of local color to finish a short story that he was writing, he strolled down to the little way station of the N. Y., N. H. & H. to fill it in.

He wanted his incident to be located in the "Lost and Found" office and he had never had any dealings with an institution of that kind.

As he thrust his head in at the little window, he encountered clouds of dust and fell a-sneezing. To his surprise, the man inside, standing in his shirt sleeves, with his back to possible inquirers, paid no attention. He seemed to be absorbed in reading. The office was littered with old newspapers, parcels, indistinguishable odds and ends; the air was thick with dust.

"Hello!" said Lane. "What's up?"—and he sneezed again so fiercely that the clerk jumped, dropped the book in his hands with a bang on the floor, and turned with the pugnacious air of one caught in wrong-doing.

It was his comic expression that tempted Lane to the comment: "Hope I didn't break into a love-letter?"

The clerk turned red, picked up the book at his feet and dusted it with his handkerchief. Then he said deliberately: "That's exactly what you did, sir—exactly what you did. But it wasn't written to me; it was written to a fellow called 'Harry,' and lost more than twenty years ago."

"Hey?" said Lane, on the scent at once. "In that book?"

"Dozens of 'em," said the clerk. "It's a kind of letter-diary business, meant to be sent all at once, I suppose; but the chap never got it. Too bad! He doesn't know what he missed. You see, I've been having a general clear-up to-day—house-cleanin'—and I found this thing about an hour ago, tucked away between the shelf and the wall. Been readin' it ever since. There you are—" He passed it through the window for inspection.

Lane fancied, later on, when he was in the full swing of his folly, that he had had a queer feeling the very moment the little oblong, sealskin-bound book touched his hand.

"By Jove!" said he, staring at the two sets of gilt initials—*M. S.* and *H. A. F.*—stamped on the cover. Then he opened it and pulled out from under a sort of flap on the inside cover—a girl's photograph.

"That's her—*Molly*—I guess," said the clerk through the window; and by becoming conscious of a sudden, insane impulse to smash the fellow's face for his impudence, Lane was first made aware of the madness creeping over him.

"What's her other name?" he asked, with attempted indifference.

"Don't know—*Molly* is all she mentions."

"Look here," said Lane, who was rapidly turning over the closely written pages, "will you sell me this thing?"

"Can't," was the laconic reply.

"Taint mine."

"Whose is it then?"

"Dunno. Company's, I s'pose. But it wouldn't fetch much."

"Right you are," said Lane eagerly. He felt somehow that he must rescue this little bundle of affections from the eyes of vandals. "But here's a proposition: I'll give you twenty dollars down—call

it a deposit, guaranty, what you like—for permission to keep this thing for a month or two. Then I'll let you have it back—the Company, I mean—unless I should have happened to stumble upon the owner. Of course, if she could prove her claim—"

"Oh, of course," said the clerk. "And I don't know that the company's so all-fired anxious to have it. It's only that I took an interest in the thing myself. I don't want your old money!"

It would seem, thought Lane, as he walked away with the treasure in his pocket, as if the clerk, too, had fallen under "*Molly's*" charm.

He sat up half the night, with her photograph propped before him on his desk, reading her diary; and it seemed then as if he had known her all his life. When he tried to analyze the charm, it fled before him. He fancied he knew prettier girls than even this fluffy-haired maid—with the oddly irregular eyebrows—who smiled at him out of the faded pasteboard. She was a tease, a flirt—and, for all that, she was very much in love with her "*Harry*," from whose view-point she seemed to have seen all Europe. He gathered that her little flight abroad was a prelude to her wedding and designed by a loving godmother as the finishing touch to her education. But frequently, between the lines, Lane thought he discovered an ill-concealed impatience to have done with the whole matter and come home. The last entries were on board ship on the return. Day by day she grew more eager; and on the last written page was a hurried, blotted scrawl:

We are coming up the river now and it's all gone into the past—the Old World. I have thrown it away so gladly—oh, Harry, if you knew! But you will never know—never even guess how I love you—perhaps not even see how I can love you! Shall we some day—

There it stopped. What had happened? Had she seen Harry on the dock? Had she gone ashore and forgotten the little book that bore so clearly the imprint of her heart? No, for it was found on the railway. Had the original Harry ever read the words, or was he, Harry

Lane, the first "Harry" to see the treasures of her heart poured out for the other?

After the first excitement had passed, he tried to turn the little lady into "copy;" but she proved most perverse of

probably fat and fifty and had forgotten that she had ever kept a diary, on her first trip to Europe. And Harry was bald—and stayed at home, and worked summers, that she might go abroad every year with her daughters.



The clerk jumped, dropped the book and turned

heroines. He made and flung away a dozen plans for her; and every time she danced away from them, and left him tearing his hair, his invention blunted, his wits scattered, consumed with irrational jealousy of the unknown "Harry," who had supposedly been living in a heaven with her—these twenty-five years. And here he sometimes pulled himself up with a jerk; by this time the lady was

Sometimes he worked out the probable development of the affair differently; but, having the literary temperament, he presently reached such a pass that he swore he would do nothing else until he had found her—and had resolved this cobwebby romance, that distracted his powers, into the usual elements of everyday commonplaceness. His imagination took a wicked, anticipatory delight in

doubling her chin, and thinning her hair, and stamping wrinkles all over her delicate face. He let her use paint and powder; he gave her an impossible figure, and a more than impossible husband; a family that varied in size and in ugliness according to his mood. He established her in a gingerbread suburban house from which she went ploddingly to church on Sundays.

But how should he begin his quest? The book gave him no clue beyond the initials M. S. and H. A. F., which stood for two Americans, male and female, who in the year 1884 were living—perhaps—in New England. This last he inferred from the railway station. Even the photographer's name and address had been cut from the card in order to make it fit into the pocket under the flap. Still, a determined man is likely to have his way—if he keeps on long enough.

On one of his numerous re-readings of the book, he stopped abruptly at an entry under Rome:

I lost and found my pin on the Via Sistina to-day. I missed it as soon as I got to the hotel. I fretted terribly—it seemed somehow as if I had carelessly broken one of the ties that bind us girls together. But I'd scarcely begun to worry before I was told that some one wished to see me below. His card didn't mean anything—Baron di Fontani; but when I went down, there he had the pin in his hand. Well, it seems he had studied law at Harvard for two years, so he wasn't altogether an idiot. He had put two and two together, and made out my initials, and was taking the big hotels in order as he came to them. Mine was the fourth. We found we had dozens of friends in common, and altogether he proved to be the most charming—

"Hello!" said Lane—and dropped the charming baron out of the story without ceremony. "What fools some people are! She was a college girl and he found her class-pin. Catalogues—hey? 1880-1884."

He gave up an afternoon to the search, and went home with a list of seventeen Mary S's, gleaned from every woman's college that he could find were in existence at the time. The thing that saved him from indefinite complications was the absence of a middle initial; but of the seventeen, nine were *Mary Smith!*

He sat up late that night, sorting and eliminating; and by the time that he had sorted out the most probable-sounding six, he remembered that she might possibly have finished college ten years before she went abroad. She might have belonged to a co-educational institution! Still, he went to bed with a sense of something accomplished.

The next morning he took a critical glance at the list:

1. Mary Smith of New York City.
2. Mary Snagsby of Boston.
3. Mary St. Leger of Portland.
4. Mary Smeed of Northampton.
5. Mary Spiggott of Canandaigua.
6. Mary Stanwood of Dedham.

No. 1 he resigned for the present. No. 2 did not attract him. No. 3—the thought of the Portland boat in this almost mid-winter season was not alluring. Moreover, it seemed as if she would have written the initials, M. St. L. No. 4 seemed almost painfully probable; but somehow the name was not quite pleasing. No. 5 suggested beer. No. 6—well, there really was not much excuse for not trying to look up No. 6, the point of attack being about as convenient and simple as he could well expect in such a case.

Still, he felt himself to be several kinds of a fool as he took train for Dedham that same afternoon.

He began with a telephone directory, and learned to his delight that there seemed to be in the village only four citizens corresponding to the formula, Henry A. F., who had telephones. He refused to suppose that "Molly" would have married anyone without a telephone. These were:

- Mr. Henry Albert Feeney, livery-stable keeper.
- Mr. Henry Augustus Freke, grocer.
- Mr. Henry Austen Friar, clergyman.
- Mr. Henry Arthur Forest, lawyer.

It occurred to Lane, as he stood there, that perhaps the easiest way to begin with his somewhat delicate questioning was over the telephone. He could at least retreat more quickly and less ignominiously. He began with the livery-stable man, feeling sure that this one would be counted out.

"Mr. Feeney?"

"Yes?"

"Beg pardon; but — are you married?"

The answer came as he expected — "What's that to you?" — with an increasing Irish accent.

"Business—if there is a Mrs. Feeney."

"Well, there is, then. What of it?"

"Wife's maiden name, please?"

"Lord of Love, you—"

"We shall save time, Mr. Feeney, if you come to the point."

The tone had its effect. "Emma Muldoon—" began Mr. Feeney, with growing astonishment.

"Thank you"—said Lane, and hung up the receiver. "One settled. Nothing in that."

The grocer came to his 'phone with cheerful alacrity; and Lane tried a new manner: "Sorry to trouble you, Mr. Freke, but is your wife's name *Mary*?"

"Why, no," came the astonished and somewhat expectant answer. "Who is this?"

"Thank you," said Lane, and severed the connection.

Then he rang up the lawyer.

"Mr. Forest!" came the reply in surprised tones. "Mr. Forest has been dead about three months."

"He's in the telephone book," insisted Lane foolishly.

"Can't help that," was the nonchalant retort.

"Well, perhaps you can answer my question. Does he leave a widow?—Yes?—What was her maiden name?"

"Wait a moment," said the man at the other end; then: "Katrine Munsey. Is there anything—?"

"No, thank you." He hung up the receiver.

"One more chance here," he thought,



"Molly"

divided between anxiety and amusement, as he called up the Rev. Henry Austen Friar.

He was answered by a woman's very pleasant voice: "Mr. Friar is not at home. Can I do anything for you?"

He stammered a good deal in getting out: "I'm very much afraid—it may seem impertinent—but I have a very good reason for wishing to know—Mrs. Friar's maiden name." He felt that he could not possibly have put it worse.

"I am Mrs. Friar," came the quiet answer; "and my name was Eleanor Reed."

While he was still mumbling apologies the connection was severed at the other end. Evidently she was not sufficiently interested to pursue the subject.

"Sold!" said Lane. "That's what hap-

pens in a wild-goose chase. Have I got to go on being haunted forever by a fascinating photograph — and never know the end of the story?"

As he stood, drumming with his fingers on the telephone book, wondering what to do next, the thought suddenly flashed across his mind: "How do I know—even if she was a Dedham girl—that H. A. F. lived here? She may have married somewhere else! She may be—in Japan, for example."

Well, it seemed that these clues had led to nothing. If he meant to go on being a fool, he could try Miss Smeed and Miss Spiggott and Miss Snagsby next; and in the summer, he might take a pleasure trip to Portland in search of the elusive Miss St. Leger, before he began detective work on Mary Smith of New York. But now, why not go home and put a notice in the *Transcript*? It was simple, and might quiet the ghost, even if it did not bring any more tangible results.

There was a flurry of snow as he stepped out into the street, and he quickened his steps to the station. But at the corner he halted irresolute, remembering that he had some minutes to wait for his train.

"I wonder—" He was aware that he must have given a bad impression of himself to the last person with whom he had talked, and he had a sudden, curious desire to make himself right with her. He remembered the address, and seeing that he stood at the end of that very street, on a sudden impulse he walked rapidly toward the number.

The house matched the woman's voice, he decided at a glance—low, old-fashioned and trimly white-curtained, with a path to the colonial porch between shrubs and flower-beds, now flecked with snow. The knocker was a griffin's head.

He stepped at once into an atmosphere of eastern rugs and old engravings, and after a moment's delay was taken back into a room with long windows, facing a back garden. A white-haired woman in a gray dress sat at one of them, sewing. She was a handsome old lady, but no more like the Molly of the picture than the Venus de Milo.

But there was something about her that relieved his embarrassment and loosened his tongue: "I think my best introduction, Mrs. Friar, is to tell a somewhat curious story, if you can be patient with me a moment."

She gave him attentive hearing, and after a moment laid down her sewing.

When he had finished, all she asked was: "But how did you happen to come—here?"

He told her, adding that it was he who had made such a hash over the telephone a few moments before.

"I see," she answered, and, pressing her needle against her lips, looked out into the snowy garden. And while he wondered what she was thinking about, she turned upon him with a sudden smile that made her beautiful: "This is very strange! Could you—would you let me see the little book? That is, if you have it—?"

As he handed it to her, his heart skipped a beat with disappointment: "You can't be—you surely are not—?"

She smiled again: "No; I told you my name was Eleanor Reed."

She opened the book and at once seemed to fall under its spell. Page after page she turned without comment; and yet it crossed his mind once or twice that she was not really reading at all, but thinking. At last he rose and moved restlessly across the room, fancying that she had forgotten him altogether.

Perhaps he was right, for she looked up at the sound of his pacing, laid down the diary, removed her spectacles and wiped them—was it possible that she had been crying?

"Well—well—" said she. "I am thinking how I can help you. So you want to find this Molly, do you? Why?"

"I don't know—" he began. Then, suddenly resigning himself to disclose the full measure of his boyishness: "I think I fell in love with her photograph at first sight."

"Is there a photograph?" she asked, in a startled way. And when he drew it out for her, she quietly put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Do you know her?" he asked, with a swift wild hope.



"Yes, I'm Molly," said she, "but I don't know you"

She shook her head: "No, I have never even seen her; but somehow—she is very fascinating—I wish Harry might have had the little book."

"Perhaps he did?" suggested Lane, wondering a little that she had noticed the man's name.

But she would not agree.

"How do you know?"

"Intuition, perhaps—call it that. I don't think he would have lost it."

"How do you know what kind of a chap he was? I've been horribly jealous of him ever since I've had the book!" He caught himself up with a laugh: "Fancy my telling you this, when I've known you only half an hour! But it seems longer. It seems somehow as if I knew you awfully well. I wonder what made me come, anyway?"

"I wonder," said she very seriously. "These things are beyond understanding." Then she dimpled and was pretty again: "But you, with your talk of jealousy, aren't you forgetting that if she's still alive, she must be a woman of about my age?"

"No, I remember that," said he; "but it seems—somehow—as if I can't rest until I see her. I can't explain it." He felt very young and foolish as he added: "You wouldn't understand, I suppose; but it would have been a relief to me if you had turned out to be the right one. I suppose I don't like to think that she may not have turned out to be all that the diary promised."

She laughed and shook her head. "That's very pretty. But I'm not, and I can't be. However, I do understand, I think." She hesitated a moment, then added: "Well, you asked me my name, first thing; what's yours, Mr. Lane?"

"Oh, my name's Harry, too," said he ruefully.

"That's odd," said she; and after a moment turned her face toward the garden; he fancied it was to hide some emotion.

The situation grew embarrassing, and he again made signs of going. Then she turned back to him from the gray day outside, and said, with a curious kind of suppressed passion: "I simply cannot understand it—the working out of

things. Chance we call it, but it's no more chance—What is it that brings together and separates—that decrees whether we shall have tears or laughter for our portion? Why did Molly pour her little heart out in those pages, only to have them lost—unappreciated, unknown—for more than twenty years? And why should you be the one to find it—you, another Harry? And come here, as you have done? What's it all for, God help us!" . . . She checked herself suddenly and rose. "No, I am not mad, as you seem to be thinking. I was about to say—let me see. Oh, yes, I am sorry that my husband is out, he would have been pleased to meet you." She crossed to the mantel-piece and took down a photograph. "This is he?"

It was a curious, intense face; with possibilities of passionate emotion, held fast in rigid, clerical lines. He could not find a trace of humor or a possibility of generous self-forgetfulness.

His unuttered thought as he handed it back was: Poor Molly—if this man had been her husband! Then he looked at the strong, capable woman before him and granted: and yet if she had been Molly, it would do very well for both of them; but she was Eleanor Reed.

"I must go," said he, with a half sigh. "There isn't much use following a will o' the wisp like this. I'm afraid you think me what I've been calling myself all along, Mrs. Frfar. And yet—if I could only get rid of the book and the picture! I can't forget it—I can't return it to the station for—goodness knows who, to read and see! What can I do? It seems like a charge."

"Yes, it does," she assented. "Well, unless you're in a very great hurry, sit down again and we'll talk about it."

He had a curious sense then that she was deliberately detaining him—that for some unknown reason, she wished to keep him there longer.

He took out his watch, but before he had seen the time, the door was pushed open with a bang, and there was a great whirl of brown hair and powdery snow that in a moment resolved itself into an excited colliie—who promptly investigated the stranger.

Lane held out his hand to take a friendly paw; then suddenly covered his eyes and retreated against the wall. He had seen—or imagined that he had seen—Molly! He was afraid to look again lest the face in its setting of gray fur should in that moment have changed back into one of the ordinary faces that he saw every day.

But somebody laughed—he never knew which of them—and when he looked again, the face was still there—unmistakable! He was across the room with outstretched hands, crying her name, before she had time, with a little repelling wave of the big muff, to bring him to a standstill.

"Yes, I'm Molly," said she. "But I don't know *you*!"

Then he tried to laugh. "I'm Harry—though you don't know it, of course." He suddenly drew out the diary and held the photograph towards her: "Isn't that pretty good—of you? Don't you recognize it?"

She gave a little cry and ran to him, dropping her muff: "Mother darling,

oh, mother! It's just like mine upstairs! Oh, how—?"

Then Lane said a bold thing: "I vowed, the minute I saw that face, that I'd follow it to the end of the world!"

They both started a little as Mrs. Friar came up to them. "Children, I think it's time for me to introduce you. Molly's mother was Mary Stanwood, Mr. Friar's first wife; and I suppose she must have lost that diary somehow on her way back from Europe. Perhaps somebody stole it, thinking it was a pocket-book. I will leave Mr. Lane to tell how he found it."

"And brought it back to Molly," said Lane under his breath, as Mrs. Friar closed the door behind her.

Neither of them remembered just then the first Molly, who had begun the history in the little book, or gave a thought to her share in life's joys and sorrows. Half unconsciously they were making the end of the story—no, not the end—only their own links in the endless chain of joy and sorrow that is the life of this world.

Valor's Votary

BY JOHN BARTON OXFORD

SOMETHING was wrong with Anderson Smith. Innumerable half-burned butts, scattered promiscuously over the window-sill, the dresser and the frayed carpet, attested to some violent cerebral disturbance on Mr. Smith's part, for ordinarily he limited himself scrupulously to six cigarets a day.

In the little hall bedroom with its single gas-jet flaring feebly on the wall, Mr. Smith sat huddled dejectedly in the base rocker, swinging monotonously to and fro, his mind a prey to thoughts of the most disquieting nature, the while the blue haze which filled the place grew steadily thicker, thanks to Mr. Smith's incessant efforts with cigaret after cigaret.

From the front parlor downstairs

there floated up to him the marked tune of a piano-player, snatches of gay laughter, and the sound of two voices in guarded and confidential conversation—one of them a soft, feminine and altogether bewitching voice, which Mr. Smith recognized only too well as belonging to his landlady's youngest daughter; the other voice masculine, domineering, and filled with a certain subtle hint of proprietorship, which made Mr. Smith grit his teeth and scowl most unpleasantly.

"Aw gee!" groaned the distraught Mr. Smith in a veritable paroxysm of despair, "he makes me sick! Acts as if he owned her already! Well, maybe he does, at that. Men like him is the very kind that catches a girl's fancy. I'll bet a

dollar he's tellin' her this blessed minute how near he's come time and time again to gettin' killed in some of them motor races, and her eyes is stickin' half out of her head and she's 'Oh-ing!' and 'Ah-ing!' at every other sentence. Yep, they make me sick, them braggin' kind, like him, does."

The sound of the player had ceased. The masculine voice was droning on in long winded narration. Mr. Smith hitched his chair nearer the open door and craned forward, the better to catch any fragments of the conversation that might carry as far as the upper hall.

"Gracious! You did?" he heard the awed tones of the landlady's youngest daughter.

"Yep! At it again!" muttered the listener in the hall room, with a disgusted curling of his thin lips. "And I had a good show with her—the best show ever before he come here to room. Now she gives me the frosty face every time I see her. Say, wouldn't it cook yer to be shook for a four-flusher like him? What if he is a motor-mechanician and rides in all them races, as he says he does? Does that make him any better'n me—what? I was plenty good enough to go to the theatre with and flirt with before he showed up. But it seems now that anyone who is a hardware salesman aint got no show with such as him. I'll bet my hat I see double a year in real money what he does. But that don't count. Girls is queer, for sure."

"Oh, goodness me!" Mr. Smith at that moment heard the girl's voice interpolating in the narrative she was listening to in the front parlor. "What did you do then, Mr. Gray? What *could* you do?"

The masculine voice sounded in a deprecating laugh.

Mr. Smith arose from his chair with such decision that he all but upset it and began to pace restlessly up and down his narrow quarters, muttering to himself and puffing at his latest cigaret harder than ever.

"Well, this Gray party has got me chased to the tall grass good and plenty," he reflected bitterly. "Taint

enough, apparently, for a man to be a good, honest, clean-cut sort of a feller. I can see that don't count nothin' with her. The chap that's goin' to cop her smiles has got to risk his neck in some fool way every other minute, or tell how he has risked it," he ended with meaning irony. "There aint no particular danger in sellin' hardware, even if there is good money in it, and there's where he's got me. Gee, it's tough!"

Mr. Smith lighted another cigaret and paced up and down, up and down, until he heard the soft good-nights in the hall below, coupled with another sound which made him wince, and he heard the heavy footsteps of the mechanician ascending the stairs to his room on the same floor as Mr. Smith's.

Then, half-heartedly, very like a man who has no faith in the success of his plans, Mr. Smith drew a small envelope, containing two tickets, from the upper drawer of his dresser and descended the stairs.

In the front parlor, when he reached it, the landlady's youngest daughter was putting away the music-rolls in the cabinet.

"Hello, Gracie!" said Mr. Smith, striving to make his tones pleasantly casual, but managing, with all his cheerful effort, to emit nothing better than a hoarse croak. "I got two tickets for the show at the Olympian to-morrow night. What say? Goin' to take it in with me?"

"Awfully good of you, Andy," said the girl, with a flush that Mr. Smith knew only too well was not on his account, "but I'm going down to Stellar Park with Mr. Gray. He wants me to see the parachute drop they're having there this week. He says—"

Mr. Smith turned on his heel.

"All right," he said thickly and very stiffly, and with never another word he creaked angrily up the stairs, painfully aware that an audible titter from the vicinity of the music-cabinet followed his disgruntled ascent.

The door of Mr. Gray's room was open, and Mr. Gray was moving about within, whistling blithely to himself, as if he were quite content with himself and with the world at large.

Smith sought his own room and sank into the rocker beneath the flickering gas-jet, with the galling sense of rout, complete and utter, rankling within him.

Long he sat there with his tousled head in his hands, mulling over the course of recent events, with a dull sense of his own helplessness and ineptitude weighing him down like some physical weight. The house was very quiet, and the snores of his enemy were creeping rumblingly through the darkened hall, when Mr. Smith finally straightened himself in the chair, took a long breath, gulped two or three times at his own amazing and unaccountable brilliancy, and then fell to chuckling softly, the while he smote his knee resoundingly again and again with his right palm.

"Sure!" he grinned to himself with unbounded relief. "Dead sure! That's the only way out of it—and a fat stiff of a mutt I am for not figuring it all out before. It aint him she's stuck on; never a bit of it. It's what he does—ridin' in them races like he does, and riskin' his precious neck, which same I only wish to heaven had been busted before he ever set foot inside this door. Likes fellers that runs risks like that, does she? Well, well, now maybe there's others that can give him cards and spades at the job, at that. Meet him at his own game and put the blink on him that way! That's the way to do it, and no doubt of it at all! Tell her about the thrills of eighty-miles-an-hour ridin', will he? Well, just watch little old me go him four or five better!"

Mr. Smith, in the excitement of the moment, opened each of the five boxes in search of a cigaret, found he had smoked up his entire supply, and compromised by lighting a fairly long butt he was fortunate enough to discover on the window-sill.

For the first time in his life, Mr. Smith, the following morning at the hardware store, asked for the day off, and this having been granted him, he proceeded at once, in a fine state of excitement, to Stellar Park. Arrived there, he with some difficulty located Professor Aëro, who made the much advertised parachute jump each evening.

"I want a job parachute jumpin'," said Smith, coming at once to the heart of the matter, as was his wont.

The professor stared. "Say, cull, what's got yer? I aint advertised for no assistant," said he.

But Mr. Smith, once his mind was made up, was not the sort to be discouraged.

"I know it," said he calmly. "But I want the job all the same. Say, I gotter go up in that balloon of yours and take the drop this evenin'. I just got to, see?"

By way of facilitating matters, Mr. Smith drew from his pocket and tentatively shook before the other's eyes, a goodly roll of bills.

It was an argument of force. The professor at once lost his air of almost belligerent aggression.

"Come inside," he invited, leading the way to a garish little shelter close to the high board fence. "Had any experience?" he questioned, once the door was closed behind him.

Mr. Smith had a fertile imagination which supplied the deficiency in this direction. Moreover, after peeling off a good half of the bills, the professor seemed more inclined to view the affair from Mr. Smith's point of view.

"Say, 'bo," he remarked, as with a quiet smile he transferred a half of Smith's money to his own pocket, "you're on. Up you goes to-night, if you wants to. Only mind, you gotter look out and not do anythin' that'll queer my job here. It's a dead cinch anyway. You don't go up more'n three hundred feet or so. Dead easy, that is. Just like fallin' outer bed. Say," he looked at Smith quizzically, "you aint given it to me straight why you wants to do it, but that aint neither here nor there, I suppose. I'll let yer go up, if yer want to, only I aint takin' no chances. When I fires this revolver to-night, you pulls the loosin'-cord, and drop. Will yer agree to that?"

"Sure!" Mr. Smith agreed.

"Now come on outside," said the professor. "I got my own device for loosin' the parachute from the trapeze bar. I'll put you onto how it works. How many times have you ever taken a drop?"

"Hundreds," Mr. Smith fabricated, being a firm believer in doing things thoroughly.

"Yer don't look like one of the perfesh," the professor began doubtfully.

Whereupon Mr. Smith slipped him an extra yellow-backed note with a meaning drooping of one eyelid.

The professor shrugged his shoulders.

"Aw, well, even if you aint never been up before, you can't git hurt if you does jest as I tells yer. This here jump here is a reg'lar old tabby's game."

It was nearing four that afternoon when Mr. Smith, a certain quiet air of coming triumph about him, returned to his lodgings. Gracie was putting the parlor to rights, humming as she worked.

"Say, I'm glad you're goin' down to the park with Gray to-night," Smith paused in the doorway to observe. "Great things, them parachute jumps. Takes all kinds of nerve to do it. What time are you goin'?"

"We start about eight, I believe," the girl replied.

Her face flushed crimson, and her eyes were turned away.

It puzzled Mr. Smith a bit that the mere mention of going to the park with the mechanician should set the girl to flushing in that fashion, but at the moment he passed it by as one of the many vagaries of the sex.

"You want to start as early as that," he declared. "The jump's on at nine sharp, and you don't want to miss it."

He turned to the stairs, but, with his foot on the first tread, he paused again.

"And say, you want to watch the feller that does the drop," he admonished. "You want to look at him sharp. Maybe—jest maybe it'll be someone you know."

Then, feeling the hot blood mounting his own cheeks, he hurried up the stairs to his hall room.

At a quarter of nine that evening, Anderson Smith, the erstwhile sober salesman of hardware, followed Professor Aëro from the little shelter close to the high board fence at Stellar Park.

Solomon in all his glory was never like Anderson Smith at that moment.

A suit of crimson tights, plentifully besprinkled with shimmering bits of tinsel, swathed his lanky frame; a gorgeous sash of green silk was wound about his waist.

Somewhere nearby, he realized dully, a band was playing, and pressing close about the ropes, which guarded the little enclosure where the balloon swayed and tugged at its moorings, a sea of people applauded the appearance of the dauntless aëronaut.

To all this homage, Professor Aëro, from long force of habit, bowed gracefully left and right, and behind him, Anderson Smith acknowledged the plaudits with a jerky movement of his head, albeit, with the approach of his hour of fame, his lips were rather dry and there was a most uncomfortable feeling of impending suffocation about his throat.

Somehow they reached the balloon and the professor was slipping Smith's arms into the slings beneath the dangling parachute.

"Keep yer head, now, and yank the cord when I fires the gun," the professor was whispering in his ear.

Slowly Smith turned his eyes to that sea of faces outside the ropes. Somewhere in the throng was Gracie, and perhaps already she had recognized the man who was to make the drop. It gave him a momentary courage, even in the midst of his gathering feeling of panic, it stiffened his drooping shoulders, and sent his head erect.

There was a last word of caution from the professor, a cry, a shout, a sudden violent upward tug at the slings beneath his arms.

Smith felt the rush of air in his face; he swung giddily to and fro. After what seemed a century he opened his eyes and looked down. Miles below him a splotch of light marked the position of Stellar Park. And even as he marveled at the distance he had traveled in the air, a pistol cracked sharply.

Smith cast another agonized glance downward. Drop from that height? Never! He shut his teeth and also his eyes. Again the gun cracked, and then came a perfect fusillade of shots.

A wisp of breeze set him to swaying crazily. It made him giddy and faint. His heart was beating to suffocation; his temples seemed bursting. It was too late to take the drop now. How under heaven was he ever to reach earth again?

Somehow he found courage to open his eyes and look down once more.

The splotch of light, which was Stellar Park, had vanished. Below him was a great void of darkness, broken here and there by infrequent, twinkling lights.

How long he traveled thus in the air he will never know. It seemed a score or so of eternities. It was only when he heard the bleating of sheep and a moment later the rustling of leaves in the wind, that he dared venture one more terror-stricken glance earthwards.

There were lights near—very near they seemed after his mad climb into the upper air. Plainly it was now or never. With a feeling that he would never have a better opportunity to stand on solid ground once more, Mr. Smith set his teeth, steeled his every nerve and pulled the loosing-cord, as the professor had instructed him.

There was a click somewhere above his head; a wild rush downwards; a sudden impact with something solid, which knocked the breath and most of his senses completely out of him.

After a time he collected his dazed wits, felt himself gingerly over and found he was not hurt beyond a few bruises. In a trice he had freed himself from the tangled heap which had but recently been the parachute, and stared about him.

He was in the yard of a house—a small, brick, ivy-covered house, nestling close to an equally vine-covered little church. And even as he stared, a motor came whirling up the drive and stopped at the door. A man and a girl alighted, hurried up the path and disappeared within.

Smith was about to follow them to the door to find out just what portion of the earth he had landed in, when the door opened again and a gray-headed old gentleman in clerical clothes peered into the darkness and espied him.

"Hello!" he called. "Just step inside, will you? You're wanted to witness a marriage ceremony. It's not legal without it, you know. Eh? What? My word, but you are a queer looking outfit."

He caught sight of the wrecked parachute close by.

"Aëronaut, eh? Well, well! Never mind. No excuses. I won't listen to 'em. This young couple needs you. I don't mind telling you they're elopers. They want the ceremony over as soon as possible. I know your costume is a trifle—er—unconventional, but they'll overlook it, no doubt. This way, if you please."

He opened the door and half-guided, half-pulled the reluctant Smith within. And then Mr. Smith, in all the gaudiness of his crimson and tinsel tights, collapsed weakly against the wall. For, standing there close to the light of the parsonage study was Gray, the motor mechanic, and the landlady's youngest daughter.

There was a gasp from the girl. She stared with unbelieving eyes, and then a great light of understanding seemed to break over her.

"You—you said—about the parachute jumper at the park," she faltered. "Was this what you meant when you said it might be someone I knew?"

Smith would have slunk into the outer darkness, had not Gray's fingers closed upon his arm.

A moment Gray eyed his late rival grimly.

"By Jove, it's too bad we couldn't have been at the park," he chuckled. "But since we've got our witness we may as well go on with the ceremony. Proceed, parson."



"Sure I can hold a pen," he murmured feebly

A Bit of Bribery

Dorothy Dacres Takes a Fling at High Finance

BY WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

Author of "The Red Mouse," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JAY HAMBIDGE

"CAN you hold a pen?" she asked him, doubtfully.

"Sure I can."

Delaney, still limp and weak after many days of fever, struggled to a sitting posture, while his young wife propped him up; then, closing his eyes, he dropped back and moaned. The perspiration stood in beads upon his face. He smiled.

"Sure I can hold a pen," he murmured, feebly, "but I tell you, Nellie, it's about all I can do. I can hold *one* pen—but I aint sure I could hold two."

Nellie laughed aloud at this sally. Her laugh was just a bit hysterical. For when Jim Delaney had been taken down,

some weeks before, Nellie Delaney's face had had the freshness and the plumpness of a bride's. Now, gaunt lines of care seamed it, and her eyes held the heavy, leaden look of one who has learned to live without sleep. But they brightened now, as she seized a sewing-board from behind the door and placed it across her husband's knees. Then, from underneath the lambrequin, she produced a narrow slip of paper, and a pen.

"I filled it out, Jim," she explained. "All you got to do is just to sign. Sign as steady as you can, dear, for you know how these here paying-tellers is."

Delaney took the pen, and, blinking, glanced at the narrow slip of paper.

"Fifty-three dollars!" he exclaimed. "Why—it's all we've got in bank."

She nodded.

"We've got to draw it, Jim," she said. "You don't know what it's been these past few weeks. It was easy getting credit at the start. But for ten days, they'd hardly give me anything at Spink's or Cutter's—or even at the drug-gist's. They've turned me down for good, now. I can't get a cent's worth without cash. You don't know how I've been waiting for the time when you could write your name, so's I could give you something good to eat—something nice and dainty-like—We've got to draw it, Jim."

"All right," said Jim.

And he started in, slowly, laboriously, to write his name. With nerves tense, with eyes starting from their sockets, the woman watched his every move, as a cat watches a mouse. When he had finished, she laughed aloud again, then dropped into a chair and burst into tears.

"It's all right, now," she said, again and again, "it's all right now. You wrote it just as you wrote it for the bank. I can get the money now."

Twenty minutes later she was standing in the street outside the People's Trust Company. In front of her stretched a long line of men and women, winding, like some great snake, in huge folds and twists and turns, along the pavement, but ever creeping slowly into the bank.

"It must be interest day," thought Nellie Delaney to herself. "I never've seen a crowd like this before."

An officer touched her on the shoulder.

"Which line?" he asked.

Nellie nodded.

"I'm drawing out," she said.

"I know you're drawin' out," returned the officer, testily, "they're all drawin' out. Are you check-account or savings? There's two lines, you know."

"I'm savings," answered Nellie.

"Stay where you are," he said.

Nellie staid where she was. In fact, it seemed to her as if she were doomed to stay there, for the line moved at a snail's pace, doubling and trebling on its tracks, for a full hour before she reached the

door. Finally, she edged her way inside; then another weary period of waiting.

"Jim'll be wantin' me," she cried within herself.

And then her face softened and she smiled.

"Jim," she whispered, as if he were there, "be patient, lad—for I'm bringin' you some oysters—an' some port wine, an'—"

At last she was the third from the window. Then, watching the two ahead of her as she had watched Jim at home, she noted that the man at the teller's window got his money and departed. Then the next depositor thrust a hand into the cage and got her money. Then Nellie drew a long sigh of relief, for in less than half an hour Jim would be sipping a thimbleful of port wine, his arm around her, and—

Click! The teller's window closed.

Nellie tapped upon it, and tried to raise it.

"Fifty-three dollars for mine," she cried out cheerily to the teller who stood beyond it.

The man behind her grunted.

"That's a queer note," he grunted; "blame window must be out of order. Hey, you," he bawled to the teller, "open her up."

The teller sat at his post with folded arms. "Can't," he returned, with desperate calmness.

"Why not?" asked Nellie, in alarm.

The teller shook his head. "The bank has stopped further payment," he announced.

For the rest—pandemonium and the police—an angry, riotous mob—wailing and gnashing of teeth. And as for Nellie Delaney, she staggered home, and dropped, almost fainting, at the side of Jim Delaney's bed.

"Jim—Jim," she sobbed, "I was goin' to bring you some oysters and port wine—an' now—"

That very afternoon she was standing in a law office facing Dorothy Dacres—the only woman lawyer in town.

"It's a man's job, Miss Dacres, I'm afraid," she said, "but I've come to you

now because you won that little wages suit for Jim; maybe you can help us out again."

"Tell me everything," said Dorothy.

Nellie told her everything, down to the oysters and port wine that Jim was to have had. And when she had finished, Dorothy's lips were quivering, too, and her eyes were moist. But she did not hesitate an instant. She drew forth from her desk a check-book and hastily wrote a check, and passed it over.

"I'll give you fifty-three dollars and take an assignment of your bank-account, Mrs. Delaney," she said, "and—"

But Nellie was upon her feet. "Wait a bit, Miss Dacres," she exclaimed, "this check is on the same bank as mine. It's on the People's, too."

Dorothy sank back into her chair.

"Is it the People's that's gone up?" she cried. "I didn't ask, and when you spoke, I thought it was the Dime. Gee, whiz! Well, they've caught me, too."

They had caught others, as well. Many, many others. Already there were scareheads in the papers. The town was, so to speak, getting up on its hind legs to howl. The People's Trust Company was the biggest bank in town. Abraham F. R. Prendergast was its president—one of the richest men thereabout; owner of Prendergast's Ale Brewery, owner of the Prendergast Villa Sites, a huge tract of land—owner of a good many things in town.

"I wonder if I can get credit," thought Dorothy, as she perused the paper that evening. "I wonder if my little two hundred odd is lost, along with Nellie's fifty-three?"

Then, suddenly, some headlines on the second page attracted her attention.

LEWELLYN LLANDGRAFF RETAINED BY DEPOSITORS

LAWYER SAYS HE WILL NEVER REST
UNTIL THEY GET THEIR RIGHTS.

A good many other people read those headlines. Of course Dorothy could not know, and the depositors could not know, that at that very instant Lawyer Llewellyn Llandgraff, and Abraham F. R. Prendergast, of the People's Trust,

were sitting closeted, with their heads together, in a room in Llandgraff's house.

"So the Public Prosecutor is a depositor in the People's?" queried Llandgraff.

Prendergast nodded.

"And the local bank inspectors, too," he added.

"O. K.," returned the lawyer. "Send them checks at once for the full amount of their deposits—or even for a little more. In a crisis of this kind we've got to take care of our friends—especially when they're liable to inspect too closely, or to prosecute too much."

Prendergast smiled a wicked smile.

"As the attorney for the depositors, I must say you are taking good care of at least two or more of your clients, Llandgraff," he remarked. "The Court-house gang and the banking superintendent's gang and—"

"By the way," exclaimed Llandgraff, "what about Roberts, the Judge of Sessions? Is he a customer—or not?"

Prendergast shook his head.

"Sorry—but he's not," he answered.

"Well," sighed Llandgraff, "then we can't send him a check."

"Too bad," assented the trust company head, "for, to tell you the truth, Judge Roberts is the only man in River County that I'm afraid of and that can't be handled. See?"

The first hearing in the receivership proceedings was held, as a matter of convenience, in the offices of the bank. Present, Llewellyn Llandgraff, belligerent counsel for the depositors—champion of the people, as distinguished from, and opposed to, the People's Trust. Present, the Referee. Present, Prendergast. Also, were on hand, reporters by the dozen, witnesses, stenographers, other counsel, and many disappointed depositors, gnawing at their finger nails and whispering to each other.

"Old Llandgraff'll give the management a turn," they said.

Dorothy sat back in a corner as was her wont and listened quietly, with some tendency to yawn over the prosy proceedings. A bank clerk was on the witness stand, identifying books of entry.

It took an hour to place the books in evidence.

"That's all," said Llandgraff, finally.

He meant by this, as every lawyer means, that he was finished with the witness. But he said it with a rising inflection, and the witness mistook it for a question—and immediately answered it.

"That's all—" replied the witness, nodding toward the books, "except another Ledger—Triple X."

On the instant there was a silence that could be felt. Prendergast's eyes popped out of his head; he glared in purple indignation at the witness. Llandgraff turned pale, but his eyes seemed to eat into the inner consciousness of the man on the stand. He asked no further questions, however.

"I'm through," he said.

The witness started to leave the witness chair. But—

"Just wait a minute, please."

The voice was Dorothy Dacres'. She rose and pressed her way toward the referee. "I want to ask just one question," she announced firmly.

Llandgraff rose from his chair to protest. "I represent the depositors here," he said. "I think the conduct of this examination on their behalf should be left to me. I am counsel for the depositors, you understand?"

"I, also, am counsel for depositors," she returned, thinking of Nellie Delaney's claim, and of her own, "and I am going to ask a question, if you please."

"Proceed," said the referee.

Dorothy nodded toward the witness.

"Will you kindly produce this Ledger Triple X," she said.

The witness flushed. He knew he had made a mistake.

"Well," he began, "I don't just—"

Prendergast coughed, and Llandgraff pulled his watch from his pocket. "If your Honor please," he began hurriedly, "I have been here for several hours already. I have a pressing New York engagement that must be kept. And if we can adjourn, say for a couple of days, then Miss Dacres can examine to her heart's content."

"The request is reasonable," remarked the referee; "this hearing stands adjourned to the sixteenth, same time and place. All witnesses attend without further notice—two sharp, you understand?"

Next day, as Dorothy Dacres was reading the account in the *Morning Mail* of Llandgraff's scathing arraignment of the officers of the bank—and just as she had concluded an unsuccessful search for any

mention in the paper of "Ledger Triple X"—just at that instant, her office door opened and Prendergast walked in.

"Miss Dacres," he said, opening his check book, "the People's Trust Company needs another lawyer. I should like to give you a general retainer, if you please—say, fifty, or perhaps a hundred. Would that do?"

Dorothy sat up very straight in her chair.



Nellie tapped upon it

"Why, Mr. Prendergast," she cried, "don't you know that I was present at the meeting yesterday on behalf of the depositors, against the bank?"

Prendergast wiped his glasses.

"Dear me," he said, "you don't say so. You were really there? How—how could I have failed to notice it?"

Dorothy's eyes twinkled.

"You didn't fail to notice it," she said, "for you nearly choked when I asked the witness to produce Ledger Triple X."

Prendergast shook his head violently.

"There's no such book," he said.

"Probably not," murmured Dorothy, "for some one may have destroyed it. But there was such a book, at any rate. And before I'm through, I'm going to know something about it. See?"

"I know nothing about it," returned Prendergast, quite positively.

He held his glasses in the air.

"How—many depositors do you represent, Miss Dacres?" he exclaimed.

Dorothy took a tight hold on herself. She wasn't going to let him know that she represented less than three hundred dollars—her own and the Delaneys'. Nor was she going to admit to him that she probably never would represent any other claimants—for the depositors were flocking to Llandgraff, their champion, *en masse*, and no other lawyer in the town had any chance. So Dorothy merely looked Prendergast straight in the eye.

"I represent more than one depositor, Mr. Prendergast," she said, "and you may rely upon it, I've got sufficient backing to probe Ledger Triple X to the bottom. Understand?"

Prendergast sadly shook his head.

"Sorry," he exclaimed, "but we need—we really need a woman lawyer. Even—why, I suppose—why, a retainer of five hundred. In fact, you may—er—name your price, Miss Dacres—that is—within reason, don't you know?"

Dorothy leaned over, interested.

"Do you mean to say, Mr. Prendergast," she asked, "that the People's Trust Company management really wants to retain me as its lawyer—and will pay five hundred dollars in advance?"

"Why, of course," he answered, beaming.

She frowned.

"I should have to drop these claims," she said to him.

"Oh, certainly," he answered, his eyes brightening.

"I'll take it, Mr. Prendergast," she said.

He started in to write. But Dorothy stopped him.

"No—not that way," she said, "I want cash—I don't want any record of this transaction, not even in your Ledger Triple X. You see?"

He saw. He drew forth his roll and peeled off five one hundred-dollar bills and passed them over. Dorothy seized them with avidity and stuffed them into her pocket-book.

"Now," she inquired, "what does the People's Trust Company desire me to do as its counsel?" she inquired.

He held out his hand, and took hers and squeezed it—a very pleasant process for him, but not for Dorothy.

"Oh—um," he said, "just this: Whenever the emergency arises, you are to act for it, if at all, and *not* against it."

When he had gone, Dorothy sent post-haste for Nellie Delaney.

"Nellie," she exclaimed in glee, "you want money in a hurry. What will you take for your account?"

"I'll take twenty-five dollars," returned Nellie, "and glad to get it. I'm told the bank wont pay fifteen cents on the dollar."

Dorothy tossed over a wad of bills.

"There you are," she exclaimed, "pass me your book."

Nellie took the money and her soul leaped within her.

"Now Jim can have them oysters and the port—" she began.

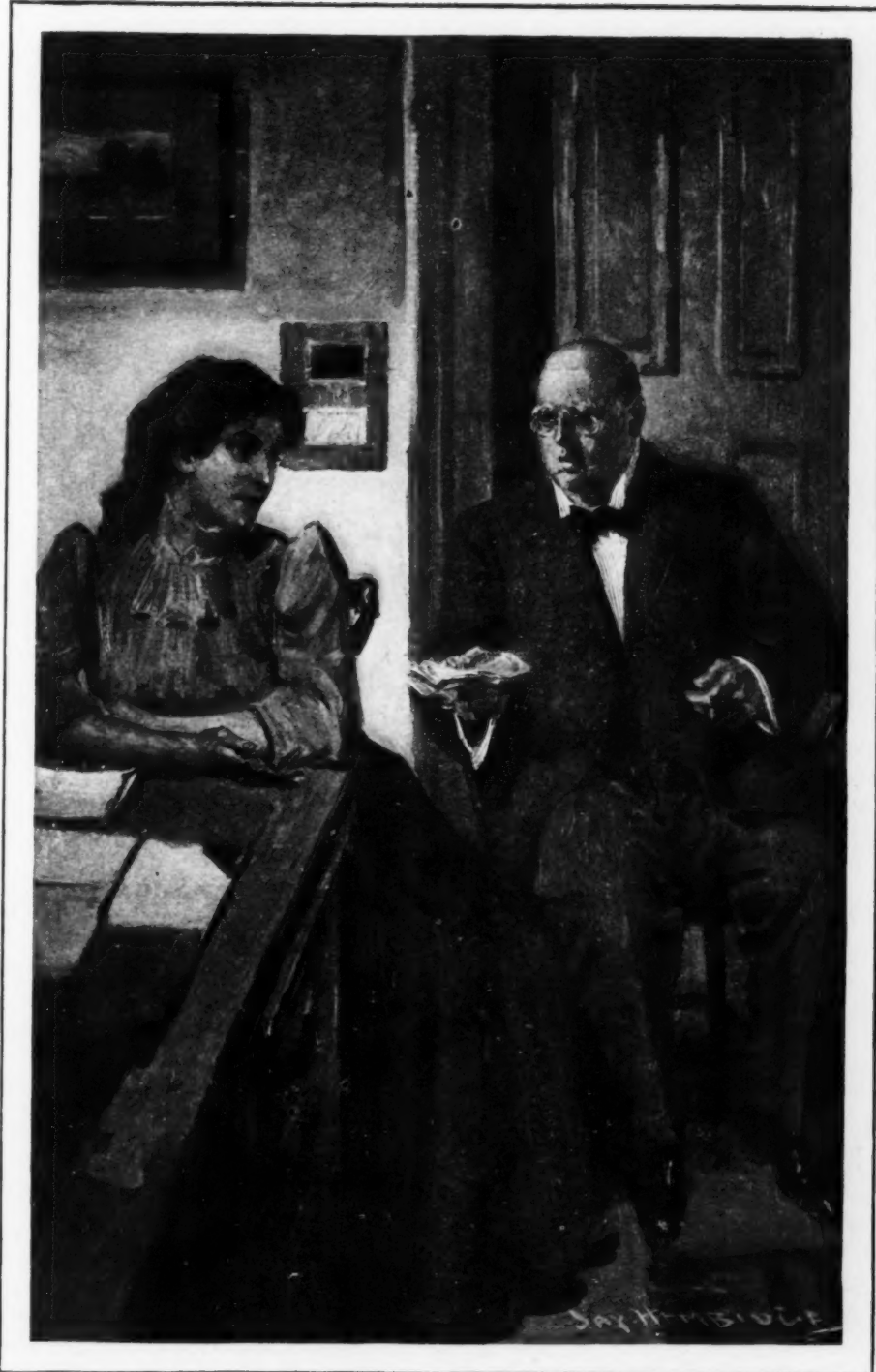
Then she stopped.

"Why—why," she gasped, "this—aint twenty-five. It's a hundred and twenty-five—it's a hundred and fifty—it's a hundred and fifty-three—"

"Exactly," said Dorothy, "a hundred more than your account. I get a hundred and you get a hundred—extra—from the bank."

"What for?" asked Nellie, aghast.

Dorothy shrugged her shoulders.



He peeled off five one hundred-dollar bills and passed them over

"Just a general retainer, Nellie," she returned. "We'll each render the bank about the same amount of service. So we've divided, don't you see? Good-day."

"Who told him to plead guilty?" queried Dorothy.

The woman before her was holding her face in her hands.

"The—the prosecutor advised it," she wailed, "and—our—our lawyer said he must."

This woman was not Nellie Delaney. She was a woman by the name of Trainor—a slender, well-dressed, aristocratic woman, with refinement stamped upon her every feature. She caught Dorothy impulsively by the hand.

"You're a woman, Miss Dacres," she exclaimed. "I've come to you because you are a woman—we see clearer sometimes, than the men. Help me—can't you help me?"

"Your lawyer advised your husband to plead guilty," repeated Dorothy. "Who is your lawyer?"

"The best in town," replied her visitor. "Llewellyn Llandgraff."

"Llewellyn Llandgraff," murmured Dorothy, the old war fever surging through her veins, for Llandgraff was her enemy by nature, as well as by force of circumstances. She hated Llandgraff. She nodded to the woman.

"And your husband is not guilty?" she inquired.

It seemed an absurd question. And yet Dorothy felt that this woman would tell her the truth, felt that this woman had searched her husband's soul for truth.

"He's not guilty," she cried, "I know he's not. Listen! Let me tell it all, briefly, Miss Dacres. We've been here only six months—only six short months. We came on from Detroit. Stuart got this offer in a hurry and accepted in a hurry. Why shouldn't he? The People's offered him three times what he was getting and gave him a glorious position—head of the loan department."

"He—made the loans?" faltered Dorothy.

The woman nodded.

"It was funny," she said. "The board of directors never had him in at any

meeting. He got the applications for loans, sometimes direct—and sometimes got them from the board. But the board passed on everything. When he got an application that he liked he put it up to the board, you understand. And when they ordered him to make a loan he made it, but not otherwise. But he never was allowed to attend a meeting. That was queer, he thought. It seems plain now."

"How, then," asked Dorothy, "did he know that the board had approved a loan—what writing—evidence—did he have before him?"

Mrs. Trainor nodded. "That's just the point," she said. "It was Mr. Prendergast—always the president—who reported to him the action of the board. The president—the head of the bank—he would tell Stuart of the approval of the board."

Dorothy's eyes narrowed.

"How do you know he did?" she asked.

The woman shivered. "You hit the nail on the head," she answered, "for—Prendergast denies it—every word. You know what happened: the bank went broke on its bad loans. It seems that there are no minutes showing the board's approval of these loans, and Prendergast denies that he approved them. They've put it all on Stuart—hundreds of thousands of dollars."

Dorothy sniffed with excitement. "I see it all," she cried. "Somebody had made bad investments; somebody got the money of the bank; somebody had to suffer. Six months ago they found your husband, offered him a big salary, and brought him on—to be—"

"A scapegoat!" gasped the woman.

"Exactly," returned Dorothy. "Mrs. Trainor," she exclaimed, still with excitement, "tell your husband to plead not guilty."

The woman hesitated. "Llandgraff thought," she faltered, "that the evidence was all against Stuart, and if he pleaded guilty and did it right away, before the public knew how big the crash was going to be—that he'd get off light."

"A—fine?" queried Dorothy.

"No," sobbed the woman. "Two years—or three—in prison. He—he may know best."

Dorothy shook her gently. "Why did you come here, Mrs. Trainor," she inquired, "for—sympathy, or for advice?"

Her client wiped her eyes. "For—both, I think," she said, quite frankly.

"You're getting both," cried Dorothy, "and you're going to do what I say, and so is your husband, or I'll know the reason. I know this town. I know Prendergast; I know Llandgraff. You do not. Your husband pleads not guilty—or I'll know the reason why."

And that was why, a week later, when Stuart Trainor, the open faced, clean-cut banking man, stood up before Judge Vanderpool Roberts of the Court of General Sessions, Dorothy Dacres stood by his side.

"We'll waive the reading of the indictment, your Honor," she exclaimed, "the defendant pleads 'Not Guilty.'"

"Hold on there," cried a voice behind her, "wait a bit! I'm this man's counsel. I plead him guilty, Judge."

The voice was Llandgraff's. He bowed to the Court, and then to Dorothy.

"I beg your Honor's pardon," he went on, "but I have been retained in this case—and we—my client and myself—agreed long ago upon the plea."

Stuart Trainor, the defendant, shook his head.

"I have told you, Mr. Llandgraff, time and again," he said, wearily, "that I would not plead guilty. I am not guilty, do you understand?"

Llandgraff bowed once more to Judge Roberts.

"The court will understand that there are times when matters of evidence—"

The Court shrugged its shoulders. "I can't understand why a man should plead guilty if he believes himself not guilty, counselor. This man's plea is 'Not guilty,' Mr. Clerk. Just put it down."

On their way out of court Llandgraff grunted in his client's ear.

"Trainor," he said, "you're making a fool of yourself and a fool of me. And you're doing more. If you let this plea stand at not guilty, do you know what it means?—it means ten years if it means a day."

"Counselor," said Trainor, "there are times when a woman knows best. I've

got a hard headed little wife who has figured this thing out, and I'm taking her advice. That's all."

"Very well, then," sighed Llandgraff, "I suppose I'll have to defend you and get licked."

Trainor turned to Dorothy. "Miss Dacres is my attorney now," he said.

Llandgraff drew Dorothy to one side. "Are you really going to take this case?" he said, in a low voice. "Why?"

"Because," answered Dorothy, looking him squarely in the eye, "I won't have him railroaded by a man like you, that's all."

Llandgraff, the lawyer, went to Prendergast. Prendergast was alarmed at first.

"She's just got a grouch on you, Llandgraff, my boy," he said. "I can fix it. I fixed her once. I can do it again. That girl certainly is fond of money. What is it the Bible says—or Shakespeare: 'Ye have been faithful in little things; I will place you over great things'—or words to that effect. You know, don't you? Well, I'm on to this lady lawyer. She fell once for coin and she'll fall again. Besides, I don't know that you ought to be this Trainor's lawyer. It looks bad—being the attorney for depositors and the attorney for the man who robbed the bank, too, don't it?"

"That's so," admitted Llandgraff, "and all I thought about was saving you by representing the people who were against you. But maybe you're right. You try her on."

Prendergast tried her on. He found her in her office, an office filled with clients, mostly of the poorer class.

"No wonder she needs money," he said to himself.

Dorothy perceived him at once, and hustled two seedy persons out of her private room to see him. He squeezed her hand again.

"Miss Dacres," he began with some attempt at severity, "I thought you were one of the counsel for the bank. I paid you a retainer, didn't I?"

Dorothy grinned. "Not a very big one," she returned. "I'm always ready for more."

Prendergast rubbed his hands. This was the kind of talk he liked. But still, he frowned.

"What do you mean, then," he exclaimed, "by taking up the defense of this chap Trainor, eh? What does it mean?"

The woman lawyer's eyes opened wide. "Why," she queried, "isn't he part of the bank? In defending him, don't I defend the bank?"

"You certainly do not," he growled.

Dorothy came back at him at once.

"Why not?" she asked. "For instance, suppose—you were on trial for stealing—or for, well say, misappropriating hundreds of thousands of dollars—wouldn't it be right for me to defend you—under my retainer? Aren't you part of the bank?"

"The case is absurd," he said. "I haven't misappropriated—"

Dorothy snickered. "What about Ledger Triple X?" she said.

He turned purple. "The bank wants this defense of Trainor dropped," he cried, "and you've been paid a retainer to act for the bank."

"But I earned the retainer," persisted Dorothy. "I quit fighting for the depositors that I represented. You paid me—bribed me to do that and I accepted the bribe. That's all you wanted of me, wasn't it? I play fair. You can't complain of me."

Again Prendergast rubbed his hands, this time in admiration.

"No, by George, I can't complain of you," he said, "you have been square."

He drew forth his roll.

"How much do you want to drop this Trainor fellow?" he went on.

"S-h-h-h," whispered Dorothy. "I won't talk to you about it now—office too full of people. We've got lots of time. See me—well, alone here, sometime, and I can talk. I've got a scheme worth two of dropping Trainor."

"What is it?" eagerly persisted Prendergast.

But Dorothy only shook her head.

"Suppose," she whispered, squeezing his hand in turn, "that you be here, say Friday afternoon at half-past five. Then we can do business. But I want to tell

you something, Mr. Prendergast—the price next time has got to be—well—big."

It was half-past five to the second the following Friday afternoon when Prendergast softly opened Dorothy's door. She was waiting for him in her outer office, and he noted that her eyes were brighter, her color higher than usual.

"You look beautiful this afternoon," he said.

He repeated it as he drew quite close to her. Once more she returned the pressure of his hand.

He waved his arm.

"Shall we go into your private office?" he asked.

She shook her head. "We'll sit here," she said.

He glanced at her in sudden suspicion.

"Is there anybody in there?" he queried.

She laughed him to scorn.

"See for yourself," she said.

He opened the door.

There was no one beyond it.

He came back.

"Why?" he asked.

She pointed to a chair. "Sit down there," she commanded. "And I'll tell you why. I'm a lawyer, but I'm a woman. And I don't sit behind locked doors, even in a business block—even in the afternoon—even with a business man. You understand? And I want to talk to you at length. I want to put through a deal here and now."

"Good," said he.

"And," she went on, "if we go into my private office, there's nothing to prevent anybody from coming into this office and listening, is there? But if we sit here, in the outside office, and anybody comes, we'll know it right away, and we can stop talking; that's the point. I don't care about people seeing us here, because it's business. But they must not hear us talk."

"Right you are," he assented.

He jerked his head once more toward the private office.

"Can anybody get in there?" he asked.

"My private office has a door leading



"Dorothy, couldn't you ever think of marrying me?"

into the hall," she said, "and that's the point. That door is locked. Nobody could get in without a key."

"The janitor?" he queried.

"Enters by this outer office door," she said. "Now, let's get down to business."

They got down to business—and unheard. But they were not unseen. For, across the street in the Baker Building, two men sat in a window in an upper floor—a window that overlooked the office of Dorothy Dacres, Attorney-at-Law. One of these two men was a young lawyer—a clean-cut, well-dressed chap. It was after hours, and the two were talking Art.

Suddenly the young lawyer leaped to his feet.

"By George," he said, "there's a Corot worth seeing, right here in town. Will you let me take you to it?"

"I'll let you take me anywhere to see a Corot," returned the other.

So they left the window and went down the street.

Meantime, Dorothy and Prendergast

sat with their heads, figuratively, together.

"Mr. Prendergast," said Dorothy, "I told you that I had a scheme the other day. That scheme is this: That I keep on defending Trainor. That I defend him on his trial—"

"No!" yelled Prendergast.

Dorothy held out her hand. "Yes," she responded, "and I'll tell you why. When his wife came to me, she had already lost confidence in Llandgraff. If I advise this man to plead guilty, she will lose confidence in me. She will go elsewhere; she will get another lawyer whom you don't know and who don't know you, you understand?"

"Make your meaning clear," said Prendergast.

"Exactly," went on Dorothy, speaking at length. "The point is, that Trainor will insist on a defense. Very well, then he ought to be defended by the right lawyer—not the wrong one."

"And—who's the right one?" queried Prendergast.

"I am," responded Dorothy.

"Why?"

"Because," said Dorothy, "I know what facts to steer clear of in the trial." Prendergast colored. "You mean—" he queried.

"Oh, Ledger Triple X—and other things."

"What other things?" he asked.

Dorothy laughed.

"Oh well," she said carelessly, "when a man like you organizes a trust company just so he can use its funds to run his brewery and to run his real estate, and to speculate in Wall Street, and to get rich by, and—"

"Stop!" cried Prendergast. "How do you know these things?"

Dorothy grinned. "Been reading the New York newspapers for the past ten years," she said.

He was silent for a long time.

"How much do you want to do this—right?" he queried.

She looked out of the window. Then she swung back again.

"Mr. Prendergast," she said, "I don't mind telling you that it's my personality that will pull this through. Judge Vanderpool Roberts of Sessions might suspect Llandgraft of putting up a job on his client, but he won't suspect me. I'm just in a position, you understand, where I can make or break you—so it seems to me."

He nodded. "How much?" he asked again.

Dorothy tapped the table with her hand. "Five thousand dollars," she returned.

He whistled in amazement. "Too much!" he cried.

Dorothy looked at him wonderingly. "Too much?" she echoed. "What—to keep you, the real bank-wrecker, out of jail? Too much?"

Without a word, he drew another roll from his pocket and counted out, this time, ten five hundred dollar bills. But Dorothy shook her head.

"Don't give them to me yet," she pleaded, "before we have a thorough understanding. I want to know just what I'm to do for this money, and I want to know it now."

"All right," he assented. Then he stopped.

He rose and stepped to the outer door and turned the latch.

"I'm going to lock this anyhow," he said. "Your reputation as a lady isn't going to suffer, and you're getting five thousand anyhow."

She silently assented.

"Now," he went on, "Dorothy—I can call you 'Dorothy,' can't I?"

"Just this once," she smiled.

"Very well," he said, "when this fellow Trainor's case comes up before Judge Roberts, you want to steer clear of all the Wilkinson loans—"

"Wait a bit," said Dorothy, seizing a pencil-pad. "The Wilkinson loans—"

"The Darnley transaction," went on Prendergast, "the Butz promissory notes—and the Fraleigh account. You see? I'll tell you why," he went on frankly, "so you can understand. The money that this Trainor loaned in those transactions ran up into hundreds of thousands—"

"And eventually," said Dorothy, "those hundreds of thousands found their way into your enterprises—I understand. Is there anything else to steer clear of, Mr. Prendergast?"

"No," he laughed, "except you'd better steer clear of me, for every time I see you I feel like giving you a kiss—"

"Instead of which," said Dorothy, in a very business-like tone, "you'd better pass over that five thousand dollar bribe."

"Here it is," he said.

He held the money out to Dorothy and she took it.

"Stop!"

It was a tremendous voice that startled them—the voice of Chandler Lefferts, a young lawyer friend of Dorothy's. He entered suddenly—not from the hall, but from the private room of Dorothy Dacres.

Behind him stalked another man—

"Judge Roberts!" exclaimed Dorothy in sheer surprise.

She was right. The other man was Judge Vanderpool Roberts of the Court of Sessions, the Judge who was going to sit in the trial of Stuart Trainor.

Chandler Lefferts looked at Prender-

gast. That gentleman's face was as white as chalk.

"What—what have you heard?" Dorothy queried.

"Everything," responded Judge Roberts of the Court of Sessions.

Prendergast shriveled up at once. "What is this," he wailed, "a—a game?"

"Not," responded the Court, "so far as I'm concerned. I came with my friend Lefferts, here, to—"

He was puzzled.

"Chandler," he queried, "what did we come here for, anyway?"

Chandler scratched his head. "Blamed if I know," he said.

Prendergast backed into the middle of the room.

"You're a lot of—liars," he exclaimed. "This is a plant."

Dorothy strode to him and looked into his face.

"It is a plant, then, if you want to know, Mr. Prendergast, and I'll tell you why it is. I started out to protect two depositors in your bank—only two—myself and another. You thought I represented fifty. You were afraid, though, of something else—of Ledger Triple X. And you bought me off, didn't you? And I was bought off, wasn't I? And you thought you could buy me off again. And—don't blame me. The methods that you employed—you and this man Llandgraff—became my methods. I fought fire with fire. You paid me five thousand, and took me into your confidence—and I let you do it. Do you know why? I'll tell you why.

"It wasn't only for Trainor that I did it; it was a far greater thing. For though, at one time, I represented only two of your depositors, now, Mr. Prendergast, I'm going to represent them all—and you, out of your brewery and your real estate and your Wall Street deals, are going to cough up—I beg your pardon, Judge, but there's no other adequate term—you're going to cough up enough to pay every depositor in full. And if you don't—"

She pointed dramatically toward the Judge. "If you don't—the Court of Sessions waits for you—that's all."

Prendergast sprang to Dorothy's side.

"Give me that five thousand back," he said.

"Not a bit of it," she answered. "This goes to Trainor—in part payment of the damages he's going to get against you for ruining his reputation."

"There's the key to your private office, Dorothy," said Chandler Lefferts, as he entered Dorothy's cozy living-room that night.

"Chan," she cried, "you're a jewel. You're always doing things for me just as I want them done. Tell me," she queried, "how did you—I never would have thought of it myself—how did you ever get his Honor to come with you, and to listen with you? That was a stroke of genius, Chan."

Chan laughed.

"Oh, just told him you had a fine Corot. What do you think he said? Said he was sorry I'd fooled him in one way—but said that—well—er—that you had any Corot frizzled to a frazzle—he said he couldn't keep his eyes off you."

Dorothy flushed with genuine pleasure.

"Hold on," persisted Chan, "don't you go to thinking about any Judge. You know it's terrible to be the wife of the Court of Sessions—your husband may be knifed any minute by the Black Hand—or kidnaped by Prendergast."

"Don't worry," returned Dorothy, "I don't want to be anybody's wife, let alone a Judge's."

Chandler Lefferts caught her by the hand.

"Dorothy," he said, "haven't you ever thought of going into partnership for life with a nice young lawyer of the male species? Couldn't you ever think of marrying me?"

"Chan," she cried, but she pressed his hand with a little more vigor than she had pressed Prendergast's, "how can I? I'm wedded to the law—the law."

In her voice was a strange, thrilling enthusiasm, that Chandler Lefferts could well understand.

"Wedded to the law—why, so am I."

Dorothy shook her head. "Judge Roberts'll be after us if we commit bigamy," she said, and smiled.

The Blue Print of Baku

BY D. E. DERMODY

Author of "Wherever They Roam," etc.

IN THE midwatch—between midnight and 4 a. m.—on board the U. S. S. *East Iowa*, anchored in the stream at Mare Island Navy Yard, Jakie Schmott, dynamo-room striker, awoke from the snoring doze into which he had lapsed, head in arms on the log-book desk. The disturbing element was the sudden cessation of the jangling discord of a mandolin in the hands of Tollman, the electrician on watch. A momentary obtrusive silence, that sometimes weirdly pervades the isolated spaces of a battleship at night—as if the mailed monster were holding its breath—had crept into Jakie's consciousness under its mantle of slumber. He sat up stiffly, yawning and stretching his arms.

"Say, you," called Tollman, "go down to the fireroom and ask Grapejuice Gimmel, the oiler on watch, if that coffee aint made yet."

But before the drowsy Jakie had slid from his high stool to the deck, "Grapejuice," otherwise Alexander Gimmel, appeared in the forward door of the clanging steel compartment, carrying a tin bucket, whence emanated a steamy cloud of delicious aroma.

"Say, you," Tollman amended his orders to the boy, "go up and tell the mid-dy on watch there's coffee, if he'll send down a pannikin."

The boy, knuckling his eyes, went off grumbling.

The electrician poured himself a generous bowl, leaned back against the bulwark and sipped critically and cautiously at the scalding-hot liquid.

"Met Frank Hildro over in Vallejo yesterday," he began the night's gossip pleasantly. "You know him, I guess—the machinist of the *Yorktown* who got his promotion a couple of months ago. He was with that delicious little Kamchatkan wife of his—leastways her accent

sounds to me like some kind of a Russian mix-up. But she's sure a little lady, wherever she hails from."

"You're right there—I know her and Hildro," agreed Grapejuice, smutting his mouth with a backward stroke of an oily hand after an unconsidered sip of coffee. "I've known Frank since long before he got married. Bully fellow he is, too; he deserves his warrant and his wife both. It was him that swiped the Blueprint of Baku—him and his gang. I was one of the gang."

"What the—Say, what you givin' us?—What's the Blueprint of Baku?" Tollman suspended his coffee bowl within two inches of his mouth. The returned Jakie was sufficiently awake also to show a slight curiosity.

"Never hear about that affair? I thought it was pretty well known among the ships by this time. You know what a blueprint is, don't you? You've got a whole tin cylinder full of them in the dynamo room locker."

"A blueprint? Yes. They're drawin's, of course. But where does Baku come in?—that's a Chink city."

"Exactly; and the blueprint was a drawing of the city. It was a military map of the fortifications and artillery. Baku is an important military point in case of war in the Far East."

"When it leaked out that the plans had been stolen, diplomatic careers were in danger. It was the time England and the United States were nagging Japan about the Manchu railways and the open door. The news about the stolen print came out when Uncle Sam dropped a letter in the Chink letter box asking why the head of a certain highgrade mandarin in Baku had been chopped off without taking time to sharpen the ax, much less give trial or notice. This mandarin was notorious for being over-

friendly to the United States, and it was from his bamboo palace that the blue-print disappeared.

"Of course, all the nations suspected all the others. The Japs said it was the Yankees and the Yankees said it was the Japs, and the Europeans all agreed it was one or the other, except England, who said it was the Kaiser's men, from Tsing-Tau.

"That was the state of affairs when the *Wyotomah* dropped anchor one day in the harbor of Cheefoo. The day after our arrival I went on shore-liberty, having permission to go early to look after some business ashore that had to be attended to during business hours. But when I climbed onto the wharf at the European quarter, I ran on Hildro. Seemed he'd got a special liberty, too, that day. We went up toward the high places together, and on the way he sounded me about some sort of an adventure that he had framed up. I knew him—what kind he is—and I promised, blind.

"'When the liberty party comes ashore at six o'clock,' he said, 'I'll lay alongside seven or eight more of the black gang, and then put you all wise. Meantime, I'll take you up to the scene of the proposed action and let you get the lay of the land—which you'll sure need to comprehend to-night.'

"You know that tough tenderloin of Cheefoo, Tollman? It's about the tenderest yet—and I've roystered in most of them from Marseilles to Calcutta, and on around. The dives would make a Bowery dance-hall at midnight sound like a church service. The Chink and Jap joints are surely pretty fierce, and you'd have to be full of *samshu* or opium, as the tenderloiners are all the time, if you wanted to pass comfortably through those purlieus of perdition.

"After making me promise to drink nothing but American beer out of sealed bottles, and mighty little of that, Hildro led me into one of the Russian halls of revel, where the revel wasn't due at that hour. We dallied over a boiled chicken, old as China, with cheese and beer, while I sized up the place with special reference to its exits and entrances, which I

learned there was only one of, and that, in front.

"At that hour we saw only a few seedy, hard-looking fellows, beachcomber breed and, queerly enough, mostly the South-of-Europe kind, coming in and out for their *samshu* or *saké*. The bartender was a fat little Jap, about as dirty as his customers. Once, though, there came in from the back a tall, thin, well-dressed, dark-complexioned, Duke of Wellington-looking chap. You'd take him to be a king's cousin who had gone wrong and been cast out.

"He had a pointed chin beard and two of the most amazingly disconcerting blue eyes that I ever encountered. After he looked at you questioningly once, you felt you must do one of two things—get away from him instantly or else kill him quick. He nodded casually to Hildro, took a shot at me with splinters of blue steel, making my heels shiver, and then paid no more attention to us.

"'Who's your friend?' I ventured helplessly of Hildro.

"'That's the boss,' he said. 'He's the danger-mark for to-night.'

"I never questioned that.

"When the six o'clock launch came off, Frank and I stood by on the dock and picked seven huskies out of the liberty party. I was beginning to be really interested, and the other fellows, having been up at the target range at Nimrod Sound for a month, all cheerfully agreed that life was growing monotonous. You know yourself what kind of a hollow ache they had for diversion of any kind. They were ready to do things.

"There was Shorty Breen, Spud Murphy, the seventh, Lemonade Laspiel, who never drinks real drink, all of whom you know, and four others of the same sort. They've awful retiring dispositions, those fellows.

"Hildro led us back to the perfumed streets of pleasure and into a quiet little Chinese restaurant, where we ate noodles and drank purple tea out of porcelain thimbles while he unfolded his projected campaign. 'Any of you ever hear about the Blueprint of Baku?' he asked.

"'Sure,' we chorused. And Breen added: 'Aint been anything else to read

about in the *Yokohama Mail* for a month.'

"I had placed my chair just outside the door of the booth, which he had taken for privacy, detailing myself as a sort of lookout. When Hildro mentioned Baku, I noticed one of the moon-faced young ladies in silk scrolls and Thibet sashes, who was supposed to be waiting on us in an attitude of respectful attention at a respectful distance, perk up her top-knotted little head and look our way. It seemed absurd that a Chinese waitress could know anything about anything—absurd beyond dreams. Just the same, I beckoned to her.

"'You savvy no tell?' I asked.

"Her round face was a real cherub's, and her smile was innocent accordingly.

"'Yee, yee, honored mins,' she squeaked. 'China glul likee Mellican bloys, Mellican cluntly, all velly fine. Me savvy no tell, glate good mins.'

"She made me feel humble, and I shut up, while Hildro 'dreed his weird,' as Scotty Jaffers used to say—which is Scotch for 'mapped out his fate.'

"'I've found out—it don't matter how,' he explained, 'that the Blueprint of Baku was stolen from the brigadier-jindle's pagoda in Baku by a Jap spy disguised as a Korean servant. On the way back to Tokyo, where he hoped to make the Mikado glad, and get medals, he was forced to stop over a day in Chee-foo, and he spent that day celebrating the glory of his ancestors and his own perspicacity. Incidentally, he woke up at an early morning hour in Pitoshi's place—where we were this afternoon, Grape-juice—and was kicked out at the front door—because there isn't any back one. The *saké* the boy had been drinking is distilled in Pitoshi's kitchen. You can guess one thing among the many that Pitoshi laid hold of, from the jiu-jitsu boy's kimono.'

"'Now, I've got a personal line of communication on Pitoshi. For instance, I know where he has the Blueprint put away, waiting for the chance to get the best price for it from any old country that wants it. I don't like a man that wont stand by his country, good or bad; but, myself, I'm not here for politics. I

don't like Pitoshi; there's a personal grudge between us—you've no idea what I mean by that—and you boys can do me a service and one to your country at the same time. You know what I want: you're to make a rough-house to-night, and while you're at it, I'll steal the Blueprint of Baku. You see, it will have to be carried out the front way under cover of the excitement. Some of you will sure get black eyes, some of you will probably be arrested—but you know the ship's folks will bail you out in the morning, and I'll stand good for the price; it wont be taken from your pay. Some one or more might possibly get the long night in; I don't think such a thing will happen, but neither do I think any of us ginks would hang back for that if there's real work to do.'

"Fine old rascal, Hildro! He knew that when he said that, none of us could possibly think of backing out. Just the same, there was a bit of silence and hesitation, while he enlarged on his plan to put the Blueprint, when he got it, on a limejuice steamer then in the harbor, for transportation to Manila—because it might compromise the American government to take such a dubious document on board an American man-o'-war.

"The hesitation was only incidental, of course. Everybody sipped his tea; and in the dead silence we could hear one of the Chinese 'gluls' sing-singing somewhere out in the back court:

John Keno, John Keno—John-John-
John—
Yokohama—Nagasaki—To-ky-o.

"That festival dirge broke the spell. Laspel spoke. 'Blat the Jap chanty!' he snarled. 'I'm game, Hildro!'

"Spud Murphy distinguished himself then by standing up and waving his porcelain thimble in the air. 'I swear it; my faith and the strong arm, in this cup of tea! What ails you muts?'

"'Aw, forget it!' drawled Breen. 'Don't make a play actor out of yourself, Spud. Dope out the attack, Hildro; I'm anxious to get to my battle station.'

"And Frank doped it out all right, in a way to win your confidence. The boy is good timber for a commission. But life is

short and mistakes are long—the whole show went woozy.

"When we sauntered into Pitoshi's place about ten o'clock that night, I understood, even then, while I had no time to explain it to the other fellows, that the man who undertook to plot against the cold-blue-eyed Pitoshi type had better look out. Anyway, I glimpsed the Chinese 'glul' who could savvy no tell, going pit-a-pat on her high-soled sandals out into the back room. The lean Pitoshi behind the bar was looking after her with his fire-blue eyes seemingly sort of affectionately. I tried to whisper my discovery to Hildro, but he cut me short.

"Don't you worry about the little Chink cherub," he said.

"Just the same, I doubted the cherub. The place was filled at that hour with as desperate a looking aggregation of thugs of all nations as you could hope to get together at one spot in the world, and every bleared eye was cast on us. We lined up at the bar, trying to appear off-handed. But with our first drink—don't you ever drink anything but sealed stuff, in American bottles, in Cheefoo, Tollman—the door opened and there marched in a file of about twenty Chinese police. You know the kind—marine caps, chorus-girl shirtwaists and trousers cut like Mother Hubbards, with clubs, swords, pistols and a timid smile. As I turned from this comic opera to ask somebody about it, my absorbed eyes fell on two enormous pistols in the hands of Pitoshi, with which he was covering the ignominious nine of us simultaneously. We were betrayed, undone, trapped, and, to my notion, by a female Chinese cherub whom even a pipe-hitter could never have imagined knew anything beyond mixing chop-suey and waltzing the John Keno lullaby.

"Hildro appeared to be the most upset of the lot of us, for he dropped the bottle that he was holding level with his mouth, and it broke with a jingle at his feet. He was so rattled that he stooped to pick up the pieces.

"When he straightened up his right arm was drawn back and he was clutching a crockery cuspidor that he drove into Pitoshi's face. The Pole reeled

against the shelves behind him, knocking down many bottles. One of his guns went off and I heard more bottles smashing in the water-cooler under the bar.

"The roar of the Pole's gun stampeded the Coolie police, who started milling around the room on the run, as I've seen cattle do down home when I was a kiddie. The signal for us to begin the riot was to have been the blowing of a boatswain's whistle by Hildro. But we were not to expect it until we had been in there for a half-hour or so. Now it came prematurely. He trilled like a Minnesota meadow lark.

"The Chink cops weren't worth notice, but the European scruff was some fierce. They closed in on us as soon as Pitoshi was hit. As prearranged, three of our fellows put out the three gaslights which illuminated that crech of crime. In the darkness the beach pirates couldn't use sandbags or anything of the sort, for fear of spoiling each other—and that saved us. The last thing I remember seeing as the lights went out was a crazed Chink policeman. His pigtail stood straight up in air as he stooped over and fired his revolver at a leg of a table in a corner of the room, and then dropped the weapon, paralyzed with fright at the sound of it.

"I've got the big chief's guns, boys," shouted Lemonade Laspiel from the gloom behind the bar, and added: 'Also, I've stove in his face.' That fighting Frenchman was in his element.

"I was tired, yes! Minutes were hours while I waited for Hildro's second whistle, which was to mean that his mission was accomplished. We were to give him five minutes to get away, and then save ourselves. The signal came at last, and I made for the door, but in the square of night-light coming through the high transom some devil's orderly saw me plain and took aim with, I don't know what.

"I came to, right in Pitoshi's place. He was not there himself, having been lugged off in a rickshaw to a hospital. There was a circle of the Chinese police. In a spasm of desperate bravery they had captured me—while I was insensible. The Chinese cherub was sitting on the floor

beside me. I was trussed up like a market bird, hands tied to feet. The brave police were taking no chances.

"The cherub was sitting on her sandals, and when she saw me bat my bulged eyes in an effort to see who she was, she put a little hand on the bloody mop of my head.

"'Plore Mellican bloy!' she crooned, 'Plore blave mins! China glul velly solly for loo.'

"I was so rabid over her treachery that I believe I would have handed her one if I hadn't been spar-lashed. As it was, I actually snapped at her with my teeth, like a kicked cur. But the poor little thing thought I was trying to kiss her, and bent right over and pressed her round mouth to my sore eyes. That settled it—I stood for the cherub, whatever she had done. Fact is, something hot and wet smarted my plaguery eyes when I looked again at the little moon-face.

"Hildro told me all about it when he visited me in the sick-bay next day. The Blueprint was safe on the British tramp, bound for Manila, and he again swore that the cherub was all right. I was the only one arrested or badly hurt.

"Black eyes and recriminations among the bunch were all over by the time we reached Manila, where Hildro at once led us ashore to get our reward. He took us up the *calle* Rosario and into a rose-covered little *casa*. The room that he left us in—while he went to fetch the fatal document—had a rainbow carpet on the floor, something unusual in the Islands, and all sorts of ornaments on the walls, and was altogether such a homey-looking little place, that we all felt awkward, and sat around studying the pattern of the carpet. A white-haired old Spanish lady in black, the sort they call a *duenna*, coming in like a shadow from the back, stood by the rear door and looked across at a white crucifix on the opposite wall. I looked another way. I didn't know Hildro was back until he spoke from the middle of the floor.

"'If you-all bashful sea-bumpkins will take your eyes off the floor, you'll maybe see the Blueprint of Baku.'

"I looked up then, and looked straight

into the biggest, bluest, sweetest pair of eyes that ever set my heart thumping. And I shivered to see that they were just like the eyes of Pitoshi, except that the eyes of the devil had become the eyes of an angel.

"'I had to do it, boys,' Hildro explained as calmly as you please, as if his conscience weren't weighted with all kinds of black eyes and bruises, due to his deceit. 'She's his niece, and she came from Baku all right. Her father was a Russian consul, and died there. But her uncle was training her for a barmaid to wait on the world's scum, and he kept her locked in her room whenever my ship was in Cheefoo. I only told you half the story, because I knew that a scrap for your country was inducement enough. There aren't many girls in Cheefoo like Natalie Pitoshi, and she'll be Natalie Hildro within half an hour. I hope you aren't sorry you did a little fighting for her sake?'

As Grapejuice paused in his narrative to drain his coffee bowl, the resulting silence again disturbed the slumbers of Jakie on the log-book desk. He started up violently.

"Say, you Grapejuice," he snuffled sleepily, "you better beat it below, before that fireman that's trimmin' for a rate reports you've jumped the ship."

The oiler paused in the door, swinging his bucket.

"The whole bunch that were in that getaway visit Hildro's house every chance we get," he said. "When the niece of a man like Pitoshi can be the kind of a lady that Hildro kidnaped—well, I don't wonder he did it!"

Even Jakie looked up, puzzled, understanding that his old protector, Grapejuice, was for once saying something that he meant seriously.

Grapejuice lingered a moment, as though aware that his story was incomplete.

"The China cherub was at the rose-covered *casa* too; she had made for the dock that night, after staying to see me through. She and Natalie had always been inseparable, and are yet. It was the China girl that had shown us the way."

Escape

BY RICHARD DUFFY

ILLUSTRATED BY HERMANN WALL

THOUGH she held the pen with might and main, the brief, terrible letter was a scrawl and Barbara's signature almost undecipherable to herself. It was the first she had written to David since their marriage.

It would be—she looked through the open door of the cabin across the plain toward the railroad twenty miles away. Farther off still the sun was going down angrily red. There was a feeling of storm in the air. She turned away from the outside, her heart shrunk with fear. Yet, she must go, for all the anguish of going.

It would be late when she reached the train, but there should be a moon. She had calculated this days before, and felt the purse inside the top of her corset. It was her own money, not David's, money she had saved during all the bad luck since they had come from Canada to farm, and had fallen from failure to failure till now they had only a small herd of sheep and lived in this shell of a cabin, banished from all the world. Her breast ached with dull pain.

The bleating of sheep came to her faintly. She started, stood up and pulled the shawl about her head, brushing back the thick brown hair.

A tintype picture of David stood on the shelf between the window and the stove, where he kept his volume of Burns, his Bible, and his revolver. She took the picture and kissed it. Tears suddenly streamed down her cheeks. Till now she had been strong in her determination, strong because driven by long, long months of dull despair.



Barbara

It was weakness to cry, she thought, and she choked the sobs in her throat till they burned. She looked at the table. His supper was ready. She picked up the letter, laid it on his plate, and put his fork on top of it. Only his side of the table was set, and at hers she had written the letter.

The thought of him sitting there alone unnerved her. With a wild look about, as if she were being watched, she covered her eyes with her hands. He loved the loneliness, his Bible, and his book of songs. The loneliness had been killing her by inches. If only it had killed her. Instead it was driving her mad. Yet to run away from him was frightful; but she must get back to people, to her own people.

Then came to her the sound of his voice. He was hallooing to her from afar, as he did every evening when he reached what he called his welcoming spot. Had she waited too long?

"I can't stay, I can't stay!" she said in a hushed scream, and her hands clutching the shawl at her throat, she fled through the open door towards people and the world.

From the other side of all things came David, the visionary gaze in his large black eyes brilliant, as if from unusual excitement. His black hair, though he was barely thirty, was thickly streaked with gray and waved back uncombed from his forehead.

As he passed through the woodshed from the rear of the cabin, he thought he must straighten it out soon, it was so cluttered with nondescript lumber. Then, for the first time in shade that day, he felt a queer lightness in his head. He recalled that the sun had burned fiercely, and entering the cabin, he addressed his wife, laying his hand across his eyes, they burned so:

"I got too much o' the sun, I fear, lassie. My head spins. The sheep went roaming."

It eased his eyes to hold his hand on them, but he wondered why she said nothing. She must be playing hide-and-seek, as she often did, after the long day, to make him laugh. The queer feeling in his head increased. He began to be alarmed.

"Barbara! Barbara!" he called, looking about him. "I'm not well. Come to me!"

Outside it thundered—not near, but miles away. The sound roused him from the panic that pressed at every nerve.

He saw the one place set at table. He saw the letter at his place and seized it feverishly. How quick the dark came in these late September days. With trembling fingers he lighted the lantern and set it on the table.

"Barbara!" he called, "I got the letter. I got your surprise. A letter after all these months. How came ye by it?"

He picked up the sheet of paper. But Barbara did not appear. He looked about him with anxious inquiry. Then he looked at the letter and swayed weakly on his feet.

MY DAVID DARLING:

I love ye dearly but I canna endure the loneliness nae more. I'm fleein' from ye, an' ye'll curse me, an' my mither in her grave will curse me, an' God will punish me, but I must go or I'll be mad.

You love the sheep, the lonely prairie and the wide sky, but I'm only a wee

woman and afraid of them. I must go. Darling Davy, please dinna curse me, for my heart's breaking, but I must go. Good-by.

BARBARA.

When he had read it, he smiled. It seemed a prank, a freakish prank. She was hiding somewhere, outside the door, maybe. He went toward it and called her.

The thunder, coming nearer, was his answer. He called her again. He screamed her name, as a man gone mad. Thunder roared again as the voice of doom. His soul wilted within him. He began to cry like a child, the world was so dark and void and his head pained so. He staggered to a chair, and laid his face on his arms on the table, groaning with the horror of a man who has looked into hell. Then he felt himself sinking into the peace of ultimate repose.

The storm galloped swiftly nearer till it landed in full fury on the roof of the cabin. All unheeding David sat in his chair, his head pillowed on his arms, till the night had worn itself wan. When he awoke, it was with a start, as one who has overslept.

He stood up, his legs wobbling, his head light and spinning. He tried to fix his eyes on some point that should set the world clear in his mind. The lantern? Where was it? Though it stood on the table, the darkness that endeth all things seemed to be in the room. On the roof rain pattered steadily. It made him think of a woman weeping—of Barbara.

Then everything came clear to him in a flash. She was sick there in bed and he had fallen asleep while watching her. He remembered how the sun—had she said it was the sun? But he knew it was the sun; and he had fallen asleep while she moaned there in bed.

"I wont fall asleep again, lassie," he mumbled, and started toward the bedside, like a man in a dream.

The sound of a groan stopped him. It seemed nearer than the weeping, which was as if rain were falling on the roof. He looked at the bed, which was very far away, though he could see her little body all in a huddle as if she were cold.



She fled towards people and the world

"I'll sit by, Barbara, an' watch ye," he maundered, and yet something made him afraid to approach the bed. "Ve're sick an' ye maun be awfu' still."

Again he heard a fearsome groan. Was she dying? He held the lantern above his head and stared at the bed, yearning to go to it, but bound in a spell. The feeling of a strange presence came over him. His tongue grew big in his mouth, his knees shook. He wanted her to cry out, to hear something, not to feel the strange presence.

A puff of chill damp wind struck his cheek. Shrinking within himself, he turned half round toward the door. He did not believe it was the wind, but the Strange Presence near.

There in the open doorway he saw it

at last—a woman, whose dark hair hung loose from her head and half veiled her white face. Her eyes he could not see. Her dress, soaked with rain, clung so that the lines of her slender, lithe body showed plainly.

David's thought was of his wife in bed. He turned toward it, and, as if believing her asleep, murmured tenderly:

"Ha nae fear, lassie."

Then he fixed his gaze again on the figure in the doorway.

"What poor creature are you?" he asked.

"You wont drive me away?" she asked and leaned heavily against the doorpost.

"It's a bad night. Come in."

But he raised his hand warningly and whispered:

"No noise. My wife lies sick there."

He pointed to the bed.

"Your wife?"

He looked at the bed, then motioned silence again. "She got a touch o' the sun an' it made her head light."

"David!"

"You know my name?" he asked suspiciously. "Who may you be?"

Immediately he turned his eyes again toward the bed.

She took hold of his arm.

"Ye dinna ken me, David?" she moaned.

He patted her shoulder gently, as if she were a child, or feeble-minded.

"How should I know ye, poor creature that y'are, maunderin' wild?"

She felt his big black eyes staring at her, remembering, knowing naught of her. She threw her hands up to her face and attempted to run across the room to the bed, crying:

"God *has* punished me."

Catching her arm, he roughly swung her back.

"Woman," he muttered, "stop yellin'. Hae I nae said my wife is verra sick?"

With a shake of his fist and a gesture toward the door, he looked once more at the bed, murmuring:

"Sleep softly, lassie — sweetheart, David is by ye."

Barbara, whose eyes seized every movement and look of his, groaned aloud:

"My mother in her grave has cursed me."

Sweeping down on her, he growled in a suppressed voice:

"The devil take ye from here, shameless creature. 'Twas him brought ye."

She fell at his feet, moaning:

"David curses me!" and wept bitterly, clinging to him.

Her plain misery reached his heart. He looked down on her in pity, but ever his restless gaze turned toward the bed in the corner.

Then he laid his hands gently on the woman's shoulders and said:

"You poor wretch. I wouldna strike ye. But be still. My wife is verra sick."

She looked up from tear-streaming eyes and spoke not above a whisper:

"Forgive me, God, and let him forgive me."

David helped her to rise, asking:

"What hae ye done, woman? Hae ye sinned?"

He guided her heavy steps to the chair and sat her on it.

Pulling a soap-box forward as his seat, he took a position whence he could see the bed over her shoulder. He looked at her as the gentlest and most forgiving of all men.

When she encountered again the unrecognized stare in his eyes, which every other few seconds were cast upon the bed, her own closed and she whispered:

"I have sinned against God and man."

He touched her bowed head and assured her of God's forgiveness.

"You'll forgive me, too, wont ye, David?" she entreated.

His eyes roamed before her and finally faced her, quite lifeless.

They frightened her and clutching his hands, she cried:

"Say you will! Say you will!"

"My poor woman, are ye daft?" he asked humorously.

But in an instant his mood changed. He stood up and got his Bible from the shelf. He held it up before her.

"God's our witness," he said in low, solemn tones. "Now, woman, what hae ye done?"

He kissed the book and held it for her to kiss. This she did and kissed his hand also.

"The truth, woman, only the truth!"

Fixing his eyes with hers, she began softly and as if explaining to a child.

"Ever since we came here, David, when we bought the sheep ranch, my heart's been drying up with loneliness."

"How many sheep hae ye got?" he asked abstractedly.

"Think, David, we've not seen another soul in a year—we've never heard the sound of a train."

"A man has peace and quiet here."

"You love the wide sky and the endless prairie—"

"Love them? Woman, I'm part o' them. The sun, the moon, the stars are my brothers. When I sleep at last beneath the prairie, they will keep watch."



"You'll forgive me, too, won't you, David?"

"David, I was afraid of them."

"Afraid? An' God so near ye?"

"Now you see what I mean, don't ye?"

"Yes, yes, but not so loud. The bed there—"

And he looked at it, concerned.

"I won't talk loud, but you must listen very closely. You see, I ran away."

His attention had wandered. She took his hand fondly, looked at him with infinite longing and tried to banish the queer dull gaze from his eyes.

"I ran away from my husband."

A look of horror came into his face, he tore his hand free and growled at her: "Sinner!"

"No, no, not that. I couldn't bear the loneliness. I was going back home in Canada. You would never go back, you said so often. I ran and ran towards the railroad, and then my heart suddenly broke and cried out for you. I turned and ran miles and miles in the rain. The eye of God was on me in the lightning and his voice in the thunder, saying: 'Go back, go back!'"

He seized her arm and led her towards the door.

"Yes," he said, "ye must go back. Whom God hath joined together—"

She sprang away from him and made a dash toward the table, for she had caught sight of her letter half hidden under the lantern. She grabbed the scrawled sheet of paper. It would bring him back surely.

When she turned to show it to him, her heart stopped.

"Out, woman, out!" he cried frantically, and pointed his revolver at her head. "Sinner, go back to your husband. God bids me send ye."

With a piercing scream of terror she rushed through the open door and closed it tight after her.

She held it fast shut lest he should follow her. She listened. He seemed to stagger and lean heavily against it. All was still for a moment. Then she heard him walking unsteadily in the room. Then silence again.

She stole along the cabin wall to the window and looked through the pane cautiously. He was sitting at the table, his head on his arms. She wondered

whether he might not get up at any moment, and stood watching him till the first gray streaks of dawn showed in the sky. David had not moved.

She crept around to the woodshed and came softly into the cabin, picking her way amidst the litter like a cat. She was in the room now, standing beside the bed. Fear froze her breast, for he sat sprawled there on the table as one dead. She made as if to go to him, but halted.

Then she slipped her clothes off and laid them on her chair, always eyeing him fearfully. She braided her hair. Suppose he were dead? She wanted to go to him, to touch him, yet did not dare.

The letter fell to the floor. She picked it up and hid it in the case of her pillow.

When she had put on her nightgown she glided into bed noiselessly and lay there a few seconds before she called softly:

"David, David!"

He answered her not, nor made any move. She felt as if she must leap from the bed, run to him and urge him back to life.

"David, David!" she screamed, raising herself on one arm.

He shuffled at the table and mumbled incoherently.

Barbara called again, almost with joy: "David!"

He jumped up with a start and staggered towards the bed, saying: "Here I be, lassie. Are ye better?"

"I'm not sick, David," she said, smiling at him all the love and yearning that ran in her veins.

"Not sick?"

He looked hard at her and felt her cheeks and arms. Then he looked through the window, pink with the earliest rays of the sun.

"Why didn't ye come to bed?" she asked.

"You're sure you're not sick, lassie?"

"It's you that's sick. See how hot your hands are. You've been reading late, forgot all about bed an' now 'tis morning."

She kissed his hands tenderly.

"I mind me now," he said, rubbing his eyes, "I did feel the sun to-day."

"You mean yesterday, David, an' you're sick sure."

"Was it yesterday?"

He looked at her and round the room. Then with a stifled cry he dropped on his knees, clutching her in his arms.

She stroked his hair lightly and asked:

She sat up and kissed him, crooning:

"Sweetheart, ye mus'na think on it. 'Twas only a dream. An' ye'll no go out to-day, ye bide with me."

"Barbara, I feel so lonely like an' I've



"Now, woman, what hae ye done?"

"Dear love, what tears your heart so, tell me?"

"Lassie, I've had the most frightful dream. A spell seemed on me. I feel as if I had murdered—"

been thinkin' o' Canada, when was 't,—yes,—yesterday."

She let her head fall back on the pillow and drew his face against hers, kissing him slowly.



He lay supine

The High-Grader

A Tale of the Nevada Desert

BY EDWARD S. MOFFETT

ILLUSTRATED BY E. ROSCOE SHRADER

HE WAS standing directly under the arc-light at the entrance to "The Silver Grill," a little thinner in body than those around him, a trifle gaunter in his smooth-shaven, rather yellowed cheek.

Well-made and well-poised, although both hair and mustache were a silvery gray, he stood planted fairly on his feet, making no abrupt movements of head or body, looking at no man overlong, letting a pair of gravely quiet eyes turn evenly from side to side.

The door of the Grill's bar held open for a moment. Through the smoke haze he saw a faro dealer glance comprehensively over his table, and then, dropping his heavy eyes, slide the cards with a familiar deftness from the nicked box.

"Ericsson!" the stranger murmured with soft surprise under his breath. "Back

in old Virginia City. Fall of '90, it was 'Slow Joe,' we used to call him."

The after-supper throngs from the restaurants were moving by. In khaki and corduroy, tweeds and blue-jeans, a broad-brimmed freighter arm-in-arm with a smooth-faced college man, the modern gold-seekers were going their jocular, cynical way. Equipped in this later day with a technical knowledge that capped their father's courage, the youthful East and the ancient West had clasped hands again, across an air-drill and an automobile. The stranger, puzzled, could only shake his head.

The sound of droning voices woke him from his reverie. With something of a start he saw another thing that was strange to him; a blue-clad band of Salvationists chanting and swaying in the dust clouds of the street, breaking in

upon the never-ceasing ripple of the dance-hall pianos and the whirl of the wings of Chance. Against a flaring background of saloons, with cymbal and drum and croaking, wind-rasped voices, out of the strength of their faith they were crying to the unregenerate to come and be saved.

One of the voices rang truer than the rest and he saw a woman, half-hidden in a shadow, near the group. Apparently she had joined the singers under cover of the hymn, but, once in swing, her voice had pervaded the crude chant and filled it out with such a sweet wealth of sound that men began to move in that direction.

The tom-tom beat of the drumming and the war cries ceased. The man looked away for some other diversion. Just then the singer stepped out of the shadow and, with a gay gesture and a laugh, passed into a particularly garish saloon.

Behind him a grizzled miner grunted disgustedly. "As *per* usual," he sighed, and then, with freakish irony: "I was just kinda wishin' I was a-settin' in church back home—when she goes and spoils the whole d—d thing!"

The stranger scarcely heard him. He was searching his memory for something to match a suddenly vibrating chord. Presently he smiled, amused at the sentimental trap.

"You act like you were locoed!" he murmured to himself. "And yet, somehow, it sounded almighty like the one I used to know."

A taste of bitterness rose to his slackened lips. "I reckon I've stayed out of the game too long," he muttered. "This yere is no place for me. It's most too swift. Ottomobiles and electric lights, and the like-o-that! And those Pullman Palace cars a-comin' right into town! Why, I never see *them* things before; not in no *mining* camp.

"I reckon I should have stayed off down in Mexico," he pondered uncomfortably. "I don't seem to be ketchin' on here a little bit. Well, I guess that's what it'll be.

"And yet, Lordy! that aint any *man's* game," he said petulantly. "Why don't you buck up, and make some play?

"I aint feelin' *right*," he mused in answer to the inner voice. "Of course a fellah most likely *would* feel that-away when he didn't know just who was settin' into the game, but just the same," and the man could hardly forbear an uneasy glance around him, "it seems like there was something goin' to *happen*—like there was something *a-hangin' round*!"

About him men were in conversation. In groups of two and three they stood stretching their arms, lighting their cigars, yawning up at the star-sown desert night. All of a type, with their symmetrically dented hats, their level eyes, their low-toned voices, their thoughts likewise bore on but two matters, mines and gambling—and so they talked, interminably.

Immediately in his rear one of these murmured conversations was taking place, and with an old prospector's ear for news in a "boom" camp, he listened unobtrusively. As much as he could hear was short, and oddly fragmentary. While he listened however, he realized that there was nothing particularly strange in their manner of speech. They were his own kind; he knew it without turning his head; and they were making plain their thoughts in the same way that he himself would have used, if he had had something to hide and yet partly reveal. In a little while he began uneasily to comprehend, although as yet the key-word was missing. Presently the word came—"the Federation."

One of the two hitched closer to his companion.

"Yuh was saying he tried tuh sneak out by the back door?" he questioned in a subdued voice.

"That's what. We figured afterwards that he'd begun tuh savey." The other man's eyelids rose and fell over a knife-like glance. "But of course there was a few waiting for him at the head of the street. His little game had been tried before."

"Of course," the listener assented quickly, and with painful facetiousness, "it didn't help much, I reckon."

"No, friend," came the succinct reply. "Yuh might say it didn't help *any*!"

There was a pregnant pause, which was finally broken by the questioner. Evidently he had been pondering something yet unrevealed. But when the final, and most curious query of all, came, the stranger himself might have been the speaker. He felt his lips forming the self-same question, while his feet were already taking him away.

"What did they do with the body?"

The stranger was moving quickly now. An icy chill gathered in his body, thrilling him from head to heel. Almost stupefied by this revelation of the long forgotten danger, he could only remember to keep in motion; to keep walking away as fast as he could.

"You fool!" he muttered in hot anger. "Why didn't you *know* you couldn't come into this yere place? The old gang wont ever forget *you*, pardner!"

But while he paced to and fro, in the shadow of a side street, mapping out a plan of action, decisive footsteps sounded behind him. Before he could turn, a hand gripped his shoulder. He was whirled savagely about, and held fast. A grim face peered into his, and satisfied itself.

"What are yuh doing here?" a voice asked.

The stranger gave a weak, unmirthful laugh.

"Well, I'm *here*. That's about all, I guess."

"It may be, and it may not," was the sardonic reply. "We are recommending yuh tuh *stick around*—understand? You've been watched since noon to-day. They're acting on your case up tuh Headquarters now. Go on back tuh Main Street—yuh scab!"

The stranger's face flushed, and he began to bring his muscles cautiously under control. To gain time his lips parted to speak. As they did so something cold and blunt pressed against his coat in front. He shrank back with a startled gulp.

"Don't bet," said the deadly voice. "I've got an ace in the hole!"

Once more the stranger took up his station in front of the Grill. Here he stood for a time he took no count of.

Once he thought he would step back

to rest himself against a post. Out of the darkness the voice warned him.

"A little nearer the light, please."

With those few words what there remained of life and light seemed to die out of the man's face. Over his body something passed a desolating, withering hand. Not long ago he had seemed a fairly virile specimen. Yet, with the memory of just such punishments meted out before, it had taken only a word—just that, and the clutch of a hand—to reduce him to a weak, spiritless shell, staring impotently before him.

In a little while he began to feel something gathering about him. Certain whispering groups had edged closer. Others had moved away, but were watching unobtrusively from where they stood. Swimming up through a kind of haze he saw here and there faces which ten years ago had not been unfamiliar.

The air grew heavy; charged with an indefinable force that pressed against him with a feeling of suffocation. Presently there came a gruff word. With only a slow, pathetic look out of his hot eyes, he found himself obeying again, and moving down the street.

With him now, and on all sides, men were walking. He felt their coming behind him. He saw them ahead. Beside him, in apparent detachment, a man walked, puffing a rich cigar. At his elbow two others cluttered along in their "digging" shoes, their lunch buckets still in their hands. Elaborately careless, while one and all suited their steps to his, they were none the less surrounding him with a cunning certainty. Held fast in an intangible, yet perfectly deadly grip, he felt himself forced steadily, pitilessly forward, sometimes by an awkwardly bumping shoulder, sometimes by an unseen twitch of his coat.

And yet, but for those few, unspeaking companions, the street seemed no different from that of an hour ago. Laughter, and light, and the aroma of good food were still around him. The doors of the glittering saloons still fanned incessantly back and forth. Close by, and concealed by a curtain, a woman was singing a pulsing waltz.

The inexplicable lethargy that had be-

numbed him since his coming now seemed almost complete. Ahead of him he could see two deputy-sheriffs idling on a corner. When the others paused, he halted. It was perfectly apparent, as they murmured among themselves, that they hesitated to take him by the men who meant law and repression. And yet, at this moment of all others, when with a step and a word he could save himself, he felt that he could not raise his hand.

As they paused there, almost where he could put out his hand and touch her, the woman behind the curtain began to sing again.

For a little while a thing within him which had been beating ceased its monotonous throb. Through a fraction of time the receding blood swept down in an insufferable flood upon his heart. When the agony could be no longer supported, the wave flowed back. Hearing and sight returned apace; he felt his knees stiffening mechanically; the world was moving on again.

Above the clamor of the street he heard the woman's voice rise and swell into full-throated song:

Toyland, Joyland, Little-Girl-and-
Boyland,
Once you pass its borders
you can ne'er return again.

Once strongly and once softly she sang, as if she were pondering the words. Once in full-pulsing, swaying beat,—then only the fragments of a *pianissimo* refrain. The voice ceased. He heard the last low note, the pedal released, the click of her rings against the rack as she rested her head on her hands.

Someone touched him on the arm. "It's your move," a voice said.

He nodded dully, unseeing, only half



He flattened himself against the building

hearing. He was putting out his hand towards the concealing curtain. He was whispering what was at once his greeting and his farewell. Oddly enough he knew now whose was the voice.

The group moved forward again. They, and other quiet forms that slipped out of cabin doorways closed in around him, and directed his steps away from the dangerous lights into the fringe of the town. A night wind, acridly sweet with sage, came up from the *mesa* and smote him in the face. He began to grit his teeth as he saw the end.

Hands gripped his arms on either side. He felt his feet going down the slope, up which he had come that day, riding in the upholstered comforts of a Pullman. Presently he felt the roadway. In the star-light he could see a faintly lu-

minous ribbon stretching away into the blurred basin at his feet. Here the group came to a halt.

So quickly had the final reckoning come, so paralyzing was it in its frightful directness, that it had seemed more of an oppressing nightmare than an actuality. But now he felt the import of each deadly particular—and the ultimate goal was very near. He stood in the center of the crowd, moistening his lips and waiting.

"This yere's as good a place as any," a sour voice muttered. "We'd better rustle now, before the moon gits up."

A stream of abuse followed the words. Without further warning came the sound of a smashing blow. The stranger staggered, and sank helplessly down.

"Wait a minute!" someone objected out of the darkness. "There aint any need for that. He'll get enough, boys. Don't yuh worry."

The speaker turned to the man, now rising painfully to his feet.

"Jeff," said he, "we haven't got much tuh say tuh yuh, and your breed of scab and traitor—but this is it: There aint any of us has ever forgot what yuh done tuh us back in the Cœur d'Alene, and there never will be any. Just how yuh figgered yuh could slip in yere and *stay*, we don't any of us understand. We *own* this section. Don't yuh nor nobody else make any mistake about *that*. There aint anybody here can tell us what tuh do or what not tuh do. There aint nobody on earth nor in any other place bossin' our outfit. Now, we want to tell yuh that this here Bullionfield is no place for yuh. Yuh can't *work* here. Yuh can't *live* here. Yuh can't *loaf* here. If you're seen here one hour from now you'll never be seen again—no place. I reckon that's plain."

Another pent-up stream of abuse suddenly broke forth. Again the fist struck, and the stranger went to the ground under a rain of blows. Like a band of snarling dogs they closed in around the prostrate form. The boots began their frightful work.

"Finish it up!" hoarse voices panted.

But the man who had spoken before, interfered a second time.

"We've fixed up a little chore for yuh," he remarked sardonically. "It's been waiting quite a while,—ten years, or more."

He turned and pointed desertwards. "There it is," he said. "There's your trail all waiting for yuh. Yuh kin leave them expensive shoes of yours behind here with us. I hope yuh have a pleasant walk. Keno's a nice little sixty mile—and *no water*. Now yuh,—GIT!"

Somehow the stranger managed to rise to his feet. He took a few stumbling steps, and stood still, his battered face leering stupidly ahead. Befuddled, broken with pain though he was, the prospect even he could understand.

He knew quite well how it would be. Years before in the Desert of the Amargosa he had come upon a man who had been too long without water, and he had never forgotten.

Somehow the night would pass. Then, in a flash, dawn would be upon him; a quick, merciless dawn, with the sun flaring up over the red porphyry buttes, and flooding the waste with heat as one pours water out of a bucket. Already he felt the greasily shining rocks shooting the heat back into his face. Almost he could feel the dust, and the cutting smell of the sage searing his nose and throat. And the outcome of it all was so simple—and so sure. It had remained for the Twentieth Century American to produce a torture which Torquemada's psychologists had overlooked.

As they watched they saw him waver and settle weakly down.

"I can't do it, Mac," he groaned. "I aint the man I used to be. Let her go, somebody," he said thickly.

The sour-voiced man at once hurled a stone he had been holding. There was a sullen movement, as if they gathered for a rush. Then, as he lay supine, breathing steadily and bravely, a disintegration of the impulse took place. They paused a moment longer and croaked together. After a time a man shrugged his shoulders, and dropped out of sight in the darkness. Later others followed him, loitering along the way and murmuring together, until all out one had disappeared.

This one knelt down and turned the bloody face over with his hand.

"Can yuh hear me, Jeff?" he whispered. "Can yuh understand what I'm tellin' yuh?"

The injured man's breast heaved painfully. His head moved in silent acknowledgment.

"You're in bad shape, all right," the other said reflectively. "But I guess if yuh lay awhile you'll be able tuh navigate. I've just made an agreement with the boys that they'll turn yuh over tuh me. Mebbe I've got some little things yuh kin do around yere. Before yuh turned scab, tuh dress up that fancy wife of yours, yuh was a pretty square felluh, Jeff. I never heard no man say a word ag'in yuh. Now, if yuh figure yuh kin play fair, mebbe yuh kin git along yere for a while without getting beat up. Come around and see me in a couple of days when yuh're feeling better."

Late that night, or rather, early in the morning, a woman who wore a blue poke bonnet with a narrow red ribbon, came to where he lay and had him carried to Headquarters.

On Main Street, a little apart from the idling afternoon crowd, the Arizona Queen stood dawdling before a show window. There did not happen to be anything on view which the Queen particularly coveted, but the feigned pre-occupation afforded opportunity to watch what was going on.

And yet there was none of it that was unfamiliar, none of it whose significance passed her unfathomed or unread. Miners and gamblers, brokers and business men, tenderfeet, sight-seers, or mere derelicts—tossed helplessly about in this maelstrom of swift endeavor and still swifter Chance—the woman knew them all. Near her a stranger stood amused at the contrasts in men and occupations; but the Queen only saw in them that which unending variety had taught her to be monotony.

The Queen noted a reassuring reflection in the window, and settled her hat. After which she stared at the tips of her boots and considered if this special hour should be spent in trying new songs

on her piano, in "The Hornsilver," or in cruising for a dead-straight, double riveted tip on the market.

The woman's lower lip drooped. A frown passed over her handsome face, with its fine suggestion of better things. The lines about her mouth and eyes bit deeper into her fading cheek. Until now she had kept her looks, but she realized in her even, thoughtful way that she was no longer young and her sphere was rapidly contracting. The game was growing old—and the Queen was tired.

Night after night she was to be found at her piano playing and singing; and each night, like a gambler discounting the next day's play, she drew her pay at the bar and discreetly vanished. In some such guise men had known her all down the golden line from Nome to the Needles, a repelling woman with a softly glowing cheek, and white hands forever rippling the keys.

The woman thought of the last footing in her check-book. With her decision still unmade as to her immediate future came the overwhelming temptation to risk her hoardings in one swift whirl with Chance. It was a simple problem, if one might forget the risk. Luxury against penury, idleness *versus* work; California on one side, the Desert on the other. The Queen was tired.

Having decided to try for a tip, it became necessary to find a trustworthy source of information. And so, as she wended her way decorously and self-mindful, through long gauntlets of men, her ingenuous eyes were searching out her prey until, in front of the Miner's Hall, she stabbed it with two velvet arrows and hunted it to the "Grill."

The Queen drew off her fashionably long black gloves with smiling grace. With her elbows on the table she dropped her chin on her interlaced fingers and let her eyes glow softly upon the hard features of Macarren, the Treasurer of the miners' union.

"Mac," said she, familiarly. "I want a tip on the market."

The man stirred and smiled ironically; a little nervously, the woman thought. "Ask me something easy," he said. He ran his hand absent-mindedly through



They stood looking down into the brown cup of the desert

his hair, and bit his lip. "Tips aint any good," he continued in short, jerky sentences. "Got one last week. Straight from the Nugget crowd. Just before she dropped."

"But Nugget went right up again," objected the Queen. "I heard them saying so everywhere."

"So it did," he growled. "With me on the short side and putting up like a fool for every point she rose."

The woman's shrewd eyes flickered over his troubled face. "Last week," he had said, and he was still nervous. If he had settled, as all "shorts" must do, by this time he should be no longer worried, unless some desperate action had made his position worse.

"So you got nipped, Mac," she said thoughtfully. "Perhaps I'd better stay out of it after all."

"Oh, the market's all right," he glowered. "It was just a frame-up of the Nugget crowd. They knew I'd have tuh dip into the Local tuh make good. I did, and I reckon they're onto it. They've sent for me tuh go up tuh the mine and see 'em. They'll want the high-grading choked off, I reckon. Well, I must go along," he said, with a gulp and a start, and rose to his feet.

The "Nugget's" cage rubbed softly up the guides toward the violet vault of the night. At the surface it stopped and, with a last asthmatic cough from the hoist, settled back on the iron chairs which the top-man threw into position.

As the clay-grayed miners stepped from its shaded deck into the path of the headlight two men who waited at the time-keeper's office looked them over with steady, level eyes. When the last man had passed down the hill they nodded one to the other.

"The third man, wasn't it?" the Sheriff asked.

"Yep, that's him," answered Hadley, the "Nugget's" lessee, his tones crisp with satisfaction. "Name is Mattis—Jeff Mattis. Been on the job about a month, I think. Pretty well loaded down, wasn't he? Are you figuring to try it alone?"

"I'll send for a couple of deputies," the

Sheriff reflected aloud. "His cabin is the fifth, no, sixth in the alley back of 'The Hornsilver.' I'll have him in less than an hour—with the goods on him. I reckon you'll push the case?"

"Push the case?" Hadley repeated grimly. "You can certainly bet on that. See here, Jake," and he drew the sheriff off into the darkness where they could look down on the twinkling lights of the town. "How much do you figure that band of robbers down there has lifted out of this lease in the last two months? Something very close to fifty thousand dollars, Jake. When I said I'd prosecute the first man caught the union said they'd call a strike to last till my lease ran out. I kept still then. *I had to*. But I got a twist on them to-night at last that will make one of 'em shake in his shoes—and I guess there wont be any more high-grading out of 'Nugget' ground. Who Mattis is and whether he steals for himself alone or some other fellow, I don't know and I don't care. They offered him up as the goat and I said: 'Thanks, I'll try to get him twenty years. It isn't the man so much as it is your blamed Socialism that I'm fightin'. But I'm surprised that Macarren offered up this fellow Mattis, because he was the one who recommended him to me as a miner in the first place."

A summer moon shone down on Bul lionfield asleep. Rising over the jutting scarp of the *malapai* hills it filled the star-shot night with a gray gleaming, and paved the unassuming alley in the rear of "The Hornsilver" with a curious blue-white floor. Under its mellow touch the rambling shacks withdrew into shadowy picturesqueness. The crude tin roofs turned to sheets of crinkled silver, the mounds of empty beer bottles to great iridescent opals. Even the musty corrals, with their stark debris of baling wire and tin cans, became studies in black and white. Off on a hillside, where the dwellings lay huddled together like a band of night-herded cattle, a white-washed hut seemed floating, thistle-like, in the air.

It was some time past midnight, and the high-grader, as he swung into the alley, could see a few last rounders tack-

ing uncertainly up the empty streets. Now and then he caught a snatch of dance music, or heard a door open on the hollow roll of the roulette ball. In the squat cabins, as he passed swiftly by, only an occasional glow showed at a window. The town was fairly into its first sleep.

Although heavily weighted down by the ore hidden in his clothes and dinner pail, the man crept up to the back of "The Hornsilver" with an easy tread. In the turn of his head as he looked cautiously about, and the supple play of his limbs, he seemed not unlike some predatory animal bent on a nocturnal quest. Apparently he found some pleasure in the physical exertion, for he flexed his arms and expanded his full chest with a very evident joy in their power. There was, too, a look of queer eagerness on his face. The gaunt, indecisive lines of a month ago had disappeared. Lassitude had given place to a keen hunger for action and results. Here, to an amazing certainty, was now no weakling. Somewhere down in the "Nugget's" slopes the old skin had been shed. Work, good food, and contact with his kind had made him over. None too scrupulous perhaps over Macarren's price for protection, but he was back in the keen, fierce game again.

The man stepped into his accustomed corner, where the building and a corral made a shadow between them, and set his lunch bucket on the ground. It was very still, the only sound coming from a startled horse which nosed across the fence, and rattled its nostrils at him. With a half smile on his face he leaned against the window sill as was his wont, and prepared to listen.

Inside the curtained room some young engineers were howling harmless college songs, and he could hear their accompanist's voice taking the high notes for them. Presently, amid groans of dismay, the piano was heard to stop and it was gently but firmly closed. In a whirl of amusing chaff the young fellows bade the Queen a cordial good-night and sallied forth. For a time the listener heard her heels click up and down the empty room; then the sound faded away. When

next he felt her presence it was at the open door beside him.

Each night of his regeneration that he had stood there had found him planning less surely how he would first meet her face to face. At the beginning he had had no plan at all, beyond his grim joke of "stalling Fate to a show-down." He had resolved on this maneuver principally because some vital thing within him had been crying out for knowledge. Merely to placate it he had stood off in the darkness and stared silently in on her life while the game played itself out as it would. As he expected nothing he could lose nothing.

But, in however cynical a way he had regarded the progression of innocent events, his pride had been steadily crumbling. Just as fast as doubt had worn away, so fast had the old feeling crept in. To one who could have followed the quickening action of his mind during the past month there would have seemed an odd pathos in the way he laid aside, one by one, the very things he had nursed so long. He had done it wonderingly, almost timidly, not entirely convinced that such good luck would last. One after another he had dragged the black shapes into the light, his sins and hers, and then, certain at last that he would win, had put them forever from him for a newer, cleaner grip on life. Out of them all only a kind of dull resentment had remained. Now, with her nearness; with the light gleaming on her sunken cheek and the spangled mockery of her dress, that, too, passed away and left him only the tenderness which had been vouchsafed him in the beginning.

With a sure, but perfectly unconscious movement, he came forward and took her gently by the arm.

"Nellie," he said, "don't you know me?"

Although his coming had been sudden, she did not start or cry out, but faced him with only a swift intake of her breath. For a long time her deep eyes stared at him, enveloping him from head to foot. The light of recognition, and other things more poignant, came and went, but still she said nothing. At last something behind them softened and they

grew dim with tears. She began to waver uncertainly. The look of a waif to whom a night's lodging is suddenly opened swept into her face. Her lips formed again the ancient, chiding whisper.

"You're late to-night, Jeff," she said, and crumpled down into his arms.

The moon slipped over the bleached roadway and shone fairly into the enclosure. It shone on the two staring at each other across the years—the years that were strewn with the same refuse that made their present surroundings unlovely by daylight.

Although the woman had ceased crying now, her hands were in constant tremulous motion. Almost timidly they caressed his cheek, or surrounded and clutched his body. Now and then she drew so long a shuddering breath that he spoke a sharp word of command; then bent to kiss the thin face hiding against his clay-wet coat. Like two children alone in the world of grotesque shadows, they clutched each other, and stared, and whispered.

Inside the saloon someone raked an impatient hand across the piano keys. A heavy step sounded on the floor.

At her fierce gesture he flattened himself against the building. The wife fronted the oncomer in the passageway.

"No more music to-night, Mac," she said, with wonderful lightness. "I've put in union hours. I'm going home."

"Who said anything about music?" was the sour response. "I don't want any. I've been dancing tuh it all night." The man laid his hand on her shoulder, and forced her ahead of him to the door. "Gee! how good that air feels," he muttered. "Let me stay close tuh out-doors for a while. I'm afraid of *little* rooms."

He lolled disjointedly against the doorpost, swallowing with evident nervousness. Between fright and whiskey the man had lost his cunning.

"The Nugget felluhs got me to-day, girlie. They got me dead to rights. No more high-grading for *this* camp, or it's good-by-Jack-Macarren. And we've got tuh do something for 'em, got tuh show 'em we mean business, they say, got tuh let one of the boys do his turn. Lord! what a squeak that was," he breathed.

"It'll be *adiós* for him, but I've saved my skin!"

A question leaped to her lips, although she hardly knew why. He answered under the touch of her soft hand.

"They're after him now—Jeff Mattis. Jake Johnson was getting his deputies together when I came in. We'll see 'em go by for him, right from this door. They say—they say it's twenty years a felluh gets for stealing ore.

"And now, girlie, yuh come along with me! I'm squared, and I've had enough." He clutched at her arms to draw her nearer. "Let's cut this out. Come on tuh 'Frisco, girlie—tuh hell with the mines!"

He stopped abruptly before a look that was growing in her eyes. There was a silent moment. Then the woman spoke, not without a note of curiosity in her voice.

"Don't you know me, Jack Macarren?" she said. "Don't you really know who I am? Don't you remember a fool of a girl back in Idaho, who used to flirt with you, and your kind, and think it was smart? She was an awful kid then, but she wasn't bad—wasn't *all* bad—until she struck your fancy, and you went to her husband with your lies. And then—then when there was a chance for her yet, and you saw *that* wouldn't work, you claimed he was a scab, and you set the gang on him, and had them run him out of the country; *you*, when if I'd told what I knew about you, they'd have cut you up in little pieces! Yes, I see you remember now," she sneered with growing hysteria, "and I'm that same bad wife of Jeff Mattis, and I've stood for you, and your rotten tribe for ten years, while I hunted for him to go down on my knees to, and beg his pardon. And if you think for one, single instant I'd let him go now to save your lying heart, or do anything in the world but tell what I know—"

The cunning was coming back into the man's eyes again. Almost before she knew it, he was slipping past her towards the door. She saw his purpose, and clutched frantically at his sleeve.

But now the reckoning might no longer be delayed. Even in his first turn and twist to free himself a long arm reached around the door-post. Iron fingers dug

into his throat, and, yelping with pain, he was dragged out into the moonlight. There, for a moment, where one could see to strike, there was a swift movement, the thud of blows, and a fall.

The high-grader sank his fingers deeper into the man's throat. Raising the head he began to beat it savagely, monotonously, against the ground. Suddenly he stopped. Without a backward look, although he knew his work was only half-done, he stamped across the writhing body to where the woman stood shivering, and swept her into his arm.

"Here they come," he panted.

Only a block away three men had turned into the alley and were steadily approaching. Something glinted as one of them raised his vest to tighten his belt.

The high-grader set his foot against the corral fence and tore the boards loose with his hands. The horse which stood there started back in fright, but he soothed it while he cut the halter close to the knot.

A quick gesture, and the woman had sprung from his bent knee to the horse's back. The high-grader paused for one breathless instant, and snatched an empty bottle from the ground. Then he mounted, and kicked the horse into a run down the alley towards the deputies.

"Sing, Nellie! Sing!" he whispered. "Ki-yi! Ki-yi! Whoopee!" He burst into drunken yelling, and waved his empty bottle in the air.

"Gangway! Gangway for the Arizona Queen, and the Candy Kid!

"Lovely night for ridin', gents,
Please to come along.

"Oh, take back your custard pie, Lady,
Show me the axe instead.
For the smile on your lips,
And the light in your eye,
Are those of a mother that's dead.

"Whoopee! Chorus!

"I guess I'm a bad old hobo man,
I know that I will rue it.
But I can say this anyhow,
I never went to do it."

Straight through the three he drove, waving his bottle, and yelping foolishly, while the woman bent down in her hys-

terical laughter and threw them a kiss.

The men sprang aside, and tried for a glimpse of the rider's face. With the quickness of thought the woman unloosed a slipper and kicked it among them.

"There's a hug for the man who has it when we get back!" she laughed through the high-grader's maudlin singing. "On with the dance, kid!"

Straight down the alley, past the partially reassured three, they galloped, and into the main street. Without slackening there, they pounded on by the quiet stores and mine offices. Near the dance-halls a few appreciative roysterers cheered them wildly, but they rushed on through the light until they were out in the darkness of the *mesa*, where the feed-men had their corrals and the bulk of the freighters' wagons loomed up before them.

"If there's time to get a rig from one of these felluhs we can get on the range by sun-up," he whispered, as she slipped down into his arms, and they stood clasped for a moment. "Give me all the money you've got, Nellie, and see if you can rustle a canteen. We'll get over the line by noon and down into Bishop creek."

Another dawn had come, flashing from point to point, casting long-fingered shadows among the sage and greasewood.

An open wagon, and a team whitened with desert dust, toiled slowly up the last zig-zag and gained the summit of a range of hills. The man drew in the reins and looked back.

"Well, Nellie, we done it," he said gravely. "We aint in Californy yet—but we mighty quick will be. That near range will show us down to Bishop. I reckon we can rest here for a while."

He helped her out. They turned and stood looking down into the brown cup of the Desert, he in his fouled working-clothes, crusted gray with mud, the woman in her shimmering dress, the lace about her neck gleaming white in the flooding light.

She came behind him and rested her hand on his shoulder for a time, in silence. With arms folded, he was frowning grimly down at the blood-red buttes as

the sun drove their rosy mists away and woke them to the day's torrid heat.

"Jeff," she said, timidly, "that money I gave you—I sort of wish you'd give me back what's left. Will you, Jeff? I—I—I don't like that money!"

Without hesitation he reached into his pocket and handed it to her. His strained face relaxed into a twisted but still sweet smile. Delving deeper he brought forth handful after handful of ore, banded with gray streaks of metal.

"Throw it *all* away, Nellie! Throw it back where it came from. If that's all Life is going to give you and me this time, we don't want it. Look down there into Californy. Do you see that dark line? Do you know what that is? That's trees. That's water. That's lucerne

patches, and farms. That's going to be *home* for you and me, Nellie!"

He drew a short breath and turned so that he could face her. "We're going there mighty quick now," he said, gently. "We're going to start all over. We've both been bad, but we both know why it was. Mebbe if we aint so selfish as we were, it'll help. But we're going to clear out of this right off. We'll leave 'em the ore-stealing, and the whiskey, and the gambling, and all the rest of the rotten life. All I want out of that place is *you* and a chance to square myself with God. Will you stick, Nellie?"

Her eyes were on his.

"Stick, Jeff?" she smiled through her slow tears. "The pitch I've touched will teach me that!"

The Vagaries of Wasatch Common

BY GEORGE FREDERICK STRATTON

"EIGHT per cent., as usual, for Wasatch River Power Stock," drawled Elvinson, "and a peach of a surplus. We shall declare an extra twenty per cent. stock dividend next year."

Cutler nodded with an air of indifference which, to Elvinson, was a sure indication of deep thought. After a pause, Elvinson continued:

"Of course, dividends aren't speculations. Eight per cent. and extras is a widow and orphans' game. It's the shake-ups that count with men like us, Cutler! Investment's all right for the lazy and inefficient, but it's me for re-investment—and the little frills."

"Me, too," yawned Cutler, "I reckon I'll sell my bunch of stock an' re-invest in something that goes up and down as well as straight ahead. 'Wasatch Common' is getting too durned, monotonously good. It's a hundred-and-twenty now and was a hundred-and-twenty a year ago—with no drop between. About as exciting as running a one-cylinder car 'round a croquet-lawn on the low speed."

Elvinson chuckled. "How'd you like to see it drop to sixty?" he demanded.

"Huh!" snorted Cutler with infinite contempt. "Going to introduce another little National panic, I s'pose. Lamentable increase in living expenses; lamentable labor troubles; lamentable tariff and trust legislation—consequent risk and belittlement of capital. Same old stuff as '03—everybody flock to cover! But you can't spring it yet, Elvinson, the capitalists aren't ready."

Elvinson chuckled again. "We've been partners in a few little deals before, Cutler, that's why I'm taking you on board now. Listen—you know those falls a mile above our power plant—Hargreaves' Falls?"

"Falls! There aren't any falls. I know the old mill, but I don't know any falls—nor you, either."

"There's a dam there," insisted Elvinson, "and there used to be a ten-foot drop on the lower side, before we built ours. When we raised our dam ten feet, in order to get a greater head, we backed the water up to Hargreaves' dam and reduced his fall from ten feet to less than one. You can just see a ripple over the top of his dam."

"Well, what of that?" demanded Cutler. "Four or five thousand dollars would square him, if he hasn't been squared already. That isn't going to affect a million-dollar stock company that's paying eight per cent.—and bonuses."

"He hasn't been squared," asserted Elvinson. "He's been after us for damages and offered to sell. It's been talked over in our directors' meetings—you know that. But Hargreaves is an old plug. He won't fight, anyway, and we didn't think it necessary to put up any money until forced to."

"Huh!" Cutler again snorted contemptuously. "And I s'pose you think a yarn like that is going to plug the stock down to 60—capital's so sensitive, eh?"

"The little stockholders are, and I think you'll sell mighty quick at 120 when you hear what there is ahead. Suppose someone should quietly buy up Hargreaves' water rights and then bring a big damage suit against our company!"

"Suppose nothin'! What's he got to sell?—An old, rotten, one-horse saw-mill, an' no power. You said yourself that there isn't even a one-foot fall."

"You've omitted one asset, Cutler; there's a corking good basis for a law-suit thrown in, and the sale's already made."

"What!"

"It's made to a man who not only has the money but the fighting-blood to start up the biggest scrap you ever saw."

"Who is he?"

"Simsby."

"And who in Hades is Simsby?"

"Simsby is a young man who had the poor judgment to sign my name to a check, some time ago. Instead of sending him over the road on a ten-year trip in a striped suit, I concluded he'd be of more use to me, sometime, as an agent. Of course I hold the forged check as surety for his faithfulness."

"I see. Such a man comes in handy, sometimes. So you've really bought the Hargreave place."

"I have. Paid thirty-five hundred for it; and I figure that when I—er—Mr. Simsby has got that damage suit well under way, and thrown a blue fit into the directors—our two selves included—he

can sell to our company for thirty-five thousand, more or less—especially more; which will be a reasonable profit."

"And we're partners in that, eh?" exclaimed Cutler.

"Nit—not, Lorenzo! Not in the Hargreaves deal. That's my own particular little pie. This is one of the cases where monopoly beats combination."

"It is, eh?" protested Cutler. "Then where do I come in?"

"You come in on the stock deals, my dear fellow. Stock-selling and buying. Simsby will make no move, whatever, until I order him to. That will give you and me time to unload at 120. Then, when the suit is commenced, and we wear the proper adversity-and-calamity brand of faces—and take care of the publication of the right kind of news—the stock will drop, badly. I should say that by judicious, blanch-faced treatment, it can be hammered down to 60. Then we can buy back and bank the difference. You have a thousand shares, so your profit on the little transaction will be round about sixty thousand dollars. How's that?"

Cutler glowered.

"Don't see why I'm not in on the Hargreaves deal," he growled. "If we're going to work this, we might as well pool our interests and divide-up on the whole clean-up."

"I don't see it that way, Cutler. I've been good and square in putting you on for the stock deals. I can handle this thing entirely alone, but I know that, as we are both directors, we can put the right kind of complexion upon the matter—blue or rosy, just as we may desire. And that's where you can be of use. And you're getting your chance for a corking rake-off. But the Hargreaves deal and the law-suit are my own little game. Simsby is my man, and he'll do exactly as I tell him. You and I sha'n't be known in the matter, at all. It'll be Simsby's law-suit and Simsby's fight; and you and I'll be as much surprised and alarmed and disconcerted at his claims as the other directors. Savvy?"

The cloud on Cutler's face still darkened. "Hum—yes," he assented grudgingly at last. "Well, I guess it looks good enough."

Ten minutes later, as he kicked the high speed into his thirty horse-power runabout for the dash home to luncheon, he muttered to himself: "Simsby! I wonder if he's a good young man, trying to live down his past, or if he—er—smokes cigarets. I think I'll find Mr. Simsby and size him up."

The sizing-up of Mr. Simsby did not immediately occur. Cutler saw no special utility in that feature until the first steps of Elvinson's scheme were developed. That, of course, meant the unloading of the two directors' stock at the top price; a matter easily accomplished, in view of the highly gratifying annual statement of the company's condition. Then, without delay, Simsby's suit was entered against the company for damages of two hundred thousand dollars.

"Too big!" commented Cutler, as he read the startling headline in the local papers. "It's got 'Bluff' written all over it."

"For some men it may have," retorted Elvinson, "but not for the little fellows. The stock's gone off eighteen points already. At the next directors' meeting we'll talk up a compromise with Simsby."

"Don't hurry that," exclaimed Cutler. "We don't want to do that until the stock's dropped enough for us to buy it in again."

"Of course not! There'll be nothing but talk of it—for the present. Simsby wont look at any proposition until I give him the word. Be sure of that! Now, look here, Cutler. Young Rawlins, of *The Gazette*, called on me this morning about the law-suit, and I told him I didn't care to talk; but I did hint that he might do something with you. You're far better on that sort of thing than I am, and it's *the* chance to jam the stock down another twenty points—with the right brand of looks and language."

"That goes," agreed Cutler. "I'll give him the right mixture, and wont skip any cylinders, either!"

The result of the reporter's interview appeared a few days later, the most significant passage being as follows:

Mr. Cutler said that the big law-suit had come as a complete surprise to his company. He said that there had been

some negotiations for the purchase of the Hargreaves water-rights, but that the new owner, Mr. Simsby, seemed to have decided to take the matter into court. Mr. Cutler also stated, with much reluctance, that he understood Mr. Simsby would demand in his action that the Wasatch Company's dam be lowered enough to reduce the water to its former level. Of course if he should be upheld in this demand, it would lessen the available power of the big company by one-half.

"That's great!" ejaculated Elvinson, as he read the report. "Great! I wasn't mistaken in you, Cutler; that talk about the threatened reduction of our power will put the stock just where we want it."

"I think so," agreed the other, "it's gone off another ten points, already, and if we jog along at the same speed, it will soon reach a tempting figure for re-investment."

Elvinson chuckled gleefully. "I'd like to leave the buying to you, Cutler. I want to take a couple of weeks up north with a touring party. Anyway, we ought to act together in buying, or we'll be running the price up against each other."

"Likely to," agreed the director; "I'm going to replace my one thousand shares, and I s'pose you want about six hundred, as before?"

"Six or eight," Elvinson assented, "or even a thousand—if the price goes below 70."

Then Mr. Cutler concluded that the time was ripe for him to "size up" Mr. Simsby.

He found that gentleman in a little back room on the top-floor of a downtown office building. On the door was the inscription:

E. B. SIMSBY
REAL ESTATE

But the man, himself, did not give the impression of any extensive acquaintance with title deeds. His face indicated more of weakness than of viciousness; and almost at the first glance Cutler mentally characterized him as a low-priced machine, slow speed, with defective control.

"My name is Cutler," he announced. "I am a director of the Wasatch River Power Company."

Simsby looked embarrassed.

"Er—yes—Mr. Cutler. Pleased, I'm sure, to make your acquaintance."

"I called in," said the director, "to talk a little with you about your damage claims against us."

"Er—yes—Mr. Cutler. But really, you know, I think I shall have to refer you to my lawyers. They—er—know all about it."

"I don't think that will be necessary, or even advisable, Mr. Simsby. I think that you and I can do what little business can be done without any outside help. Suppose I proposed to buy the Hargreaves Falls from you?"

"Oh—I couldn't think of it, you know, Mr. Cutler! It's really impossible."

"It's really simple," insisted the director. "If we agree on the price, it only requires your signature to the deed—and I understand that a signature presents no special difficulty to you."

The shot went home.

Simsby flushed violently red; but before he could find any retort, Cutler continued:

"You see, I am well acquainted with your standing with Mr. Elvinson. He and I have been close friends for years; but there has come a decided breach in that friendship, because of his assault on his own company—by means of yourself, his agent. Now, wait a moment, Mr. Simsby. Look at what is happening! Wasatch Power stock has lost over forty points on account of this action, and who are the losers? Elvinson is not one, you may be sure. He is just coining money over it, and means to coin more. The losers are small stockholders who see nothing but disasters ahead—widows and orphans, my dear young man, whom you are helping to ruin."

Simsby had his elbows on his desk, now, and his chin on his hands. He tried to stammer something, but Cutler held his ground.

"I have heard that you are trying to redeem your past," he continued feelingly, "but you are in Elvinson's power, and he is using you for purposes which are outrageous. I do not suppose that you know anything of his purposes or their results, but you are acting as his agent in

a matter that can cause you nothing but the greatest mortification and self-reproach. You are a young man of ability and good purpose, I believe, and if you could make a clean start, untrammelled by your past mistake, you probably have a fine future ahead."

"It isn't possible," groaned Simsby. "I cannot get that clean start—not yet, at any rate."

"You can get it to-morrow!" declared Cutler; "Elvinson leaves this afternoon for a two weeks' touring trip up north. With, say, a couple of thousand dollars, you can start a new career in—in South America, for instance. The opportunities there for a young fellow like yourself, with a small capital, are simply unbounded."

"But how can I do it?" objected Simsby. "That property belongs to Mr. Elvinson, although it stands in my name. You probably know that."

"I know it, thoroughly," said Cutler with a smile. "My sole purpose is to get control of that property and stop the law-suit; thus relieving the small and timid stockholders of the terrific losses they will otherwise suffer. Your help in that purpose will more than redeem your past and restore your self-respect. And you have a perfect right to sign your own name—don't forget that."

Simsby dropped his head on the desk and made no utterance. Cutler felt that he had said enough, and waited for it to take effect. After many minutes, the young man lifted a white and twitching face and said—almost in a whisper: "I'll do it, Mr. Cutler."

"A praiseworthy decision, Mr. Simsby. I'll call here for you to-morrow, at eleven o'clock, and we'll go to my lawyer's and settle the matter. A steamer leaves for Buenos Aires every Tuesday, and you can easily connect with the next sailing, if you decide to go there. That will put you in South America before Elvinson has any knowledge of your selling out. It's a great country—great! Good-by until the morning."

"Well, Cutler, old fellow! How goes it?" was the hearty greeting of Mr. Elvinson as, bronzed and dust-covered, he

strode into his friend's office. "I see Wasatch is above 70."

"It has been below," Cutler cheerfully responded. "We've got our stock back at an average of about 66. Panned out pretty well—eh?"

"Fine, Cutler, fine! It's like eating up hills on the high speed. And now for the next move. There's a directors' meeting on Monday, and we'll bring up that compromise with Simsby, put it through, stop the lawsuit and then boom the stock up again. It's a corking game, old man—corking!"

"You'll find a little hitch ahead," drawled Cutler, "something unexpected."

"What's that! Why don't you get out and fill up with mountain air, you pessimist. There's nothing ahead but a fine road, and no speed limit."

"There won't be any compromise with Simsby," laughed Cutler, "because Simsby has disappeared."

"Disappeared!"

"Yes. Fortunately, before he went I arranged about the title, so there'll be no hitch there."

A quick glance of suspicion came into Elvinson's face. He dropped into a chair and exclaimed:

"Spring it, Cutler!"

"I bought the Hargreaves Falls from him before he left," again drawled the director, "so, of course that's safe."

"Go right on!"

"It doesn't sound quite complimentary to you," continued Cutler, "but I concluded that I could handle that deal better than you proposed doing."

"It's a freeze-out, then!" fiercely exclaimed Elvinson, white with rage. "You have schemed to butt in on my game and smash it, eh?"

"Keep cool," drawled Cutler, mildly. "You're too good a sport to howl at a little set-back. And I'm going to be just as square with you as you've been with me."

Elvinson was glaring wickedly, but he said nothing.

"Just one trouble with you, Elvinson," Cutler went on, "is that you're always shy about using all your power. You'll throw in the high speed and cut

down your throttle—or you'll throw the throttle wide open and then run on the low gear. For instance, you talked of making thirty thousand out of the Hargreaves dam deal. I figure on making a hundred and fifty thousand."

Elvinson growled out an incredulous expletive. Cutler grinningly continued:

"I shall withdraw the suit at once, announcing that, as a director of the Wasatch Company, I am more interested in its welfare than in any damage claim against it. That'll boom the stock again to its former price, or higher. Incidentally that will add nearly fifty thousand dollars in value to your block of stock; nine hundred shares bought at 66. I'll gain the same on my block, but that isn't where the hundred and fifty thousand comes in."

"That part sounds the most interesting," sneered Elvinson, "and the most likely—not!"

Cutler went on smilingly: "When the stock has boomed and we've taken the profits as a matter of course, I shall build a new dam at Hargreaves', twelve feet higher than the old one. That'll develop big power—one thousand horse, I estimate, as there's plenty of water back of it. Then I'll form a new company, take a hundred and fifty thousand in stock for the water-rights, and sell another hundred and fifty thousand to construct the power-house. There's plenty of market for the juice—you know that."

Elvinson glanced up sharply. "You're banking on my property, as you know, Cutler. I suppose, at least, that I get a share of the proceeds."

"Not much!" retorted Cutler. "Not so you'd notice it! You remember what you said during a similar talk: 'This is my pie'—and 'Monopoly beats combination—when you've got it.' I heartily endorse those sentiments. But you're right in on the stock dealing, Elvinson. I'll be just as square with you as you were with me."

Elvinson glared murderously. "I'd like to get my hands on Simsby!" he muttered fiercely. "I suppose you've over-looked the fact that I lose thirty-five hundred, cash—the original purchase price!"

"Oh, I'll clean you up on that," laughed Cutler. "I'll give you a check now for it. And when the new company is formed, you shall have first chance at the stock. I'll promise that."

Elvinson crumpled the check savagely into his vest pocket; but as he strode from the room there was a curious—and perhaps exultant—twinkle in his usually pleasant and good-humored eyes.

Cutler was a fine manipulator. His methods were as delicate as they were forceful. Without the least apparent attempt to pose in that guise, he was quickly credited with being the savior of the big company. His action in buying out Simsby and instantly abandoning any damage claims, was recognized as the outcome of a most commendable and successful determination to conserve fully the interests of his stockholders; and this feeling was accented by the fact that he commenced the demolition of the old Hargreaves mill and dam, hinting that he should probably build a summer cottage on the site—which was peculiarly picturesque.

All this indicated a permanent abandonment of the water rights, and the stock went up rapidly towards its old standing.

Mr. Elvinson, whose abundant good nature had apparently obliterated the late unpleasantness with his brother director, developed much interest in shooting. With gun on shoulder and dog at heel, he tramped over the rocky, uncultivated wilds through which the Wasatch River flowed, from its source in the distant mountains. His success was not remarkable—but his non-success was. He said, however, that he was tramping as much to reduce weight as to get birds. And he showed much interest in the few settlers up the river. He seemed especially to enjoy the society of one in particular, Rigby, by name, who owned an eighty acre clump of brush and rock about a mile above Hargreaves.

So, when "Wasatch Common" had recovered its normal market value, and even jumped to 135, under the stimulus of the generous dividend warranted by

another fine annual report, Cutler and Elvinson were arranging, in their old friendly and unanimous way, the judicious and immediate sale of their stock.

"Then," exclaimed Cutler exultantly, "when it's turned into cash—I'll build the new dam and form the new company. That'll knock Wasatch stock, again, sure. And we'll be able to buy back at forty or fifty points lower. It's as smooth as handling a high-grade touring-car, fresh from a high-grade shop—over a high-grade boulevard."

"Going to run across any damage claims when you build that new dam and raise the water ten or twelve feet?" carelessly inquired Elvinson.

"Not so you'd notice it," replied Cutler. "There'll be a few little overflows, but all on cheap land. I'll have to buy only one place, I s'pose—Rigby's. Ten or twelve hundred dollars'll cover that, and there'll have to be a short retaining wall built there."

Elvinson selected a cigar and tossed his case to Cutler. Then he remarked, pleasantly: "You wont have to go far to find the owner—he's within ten feet of you."

"What's that? You don't mean that you've bought the Rigby place!"

"Yes!" laughed Elvinson. "I gave fifteen hundred for it. Have an idea that it will make a good site for a summer cottage. The Wasatch is getting popular as a summer resort—eh, Cutler?"

Cutler had dropped his cigar and was staring at Elvinson with half-a-dozen emotions pictured on his face.

"Of course," continued Elvinson, "if you find it necessary to have that place, you can have it. And you'll find it necessary—no question about that!"

"I don't see why," muttered Cutler.

"Ever hear of the South Fork?" queried Elvinson.

"Heard the name; don't know where it is, and don't care," snapped Cutler.

"Before the Wasatch River was cleared below, to help the power houses," explained Elvinson pleasantly, "the water normally ran higher in the river than it does now. It overflowed that short piece of low bank at Rigby's and ran into a gully called the South Fork.

That bank is now only two feet above the water level, so that, when you build a ten or twelve-foot dam, the water will back into the South Fork instead of piling up at your dam. You'll get a rise of two feet, but not an inch more. Not a very big thing to capitalize—eh, Cutler? You were figuring on twelve feet."

Cutler had slumped down in his chair; consternation, disgust and rage struggling with each other on his twitching features.

"So that's what your shooting was for!" he growled.

"No harm done," laughed Elvinson. "As you said, yourself, a short retaining wall will keep the water in the river. You can build that wall if you care to buy the place."

Cutler choked and then gasped: "How much?"

"Let's see!—you figure on realizing a hundred and fifty thousand for the water-rights, and I own Rigby's. We'll

call the price seventy-five thousand dollars. I ought to add the thirty thousand I lost because of your dickering with that little cuss, Simsby; but I won't crowd you too hard. I'll be content with an even-split of the clean-up. Seventy-five thousand dollars is the price."

Cutler was sitting on the small of his back, his legs stretched to full length, heels on floor, and his long arms hanging limply on each side. For several minutes he gazed helplessly at Elvinson, who gazed back smilingly and benignly. Finally the discomfited director groaned and sat up.

"You've got me, Elvinson, got me bad! But I didn't think it was in you."

Fifteen minutes afterward, as the waiter at Tony Burton's was opening a bottle, Cutler—convalescent—leaned across to Elvinson and remarked:

"Monopoly's a big thing, Gus. But it sometimes takes a combination to run it!"

The Hocus-Pocus of Hetty Pease

BY ALBERT LATHROP LAWRENCE

ILLUSTRATED BY FLORENCE SCOVEL SHINN

SHE ALWAYS was good at some hocus-pocus." Those are Dan'el's words without that queer laugh of his. And I will say Hetty *could* beat any woman in our church making chicken-pies—*out of veal*. She could bake a cake without eggs that looked a sight nicer than mine in which I use eleven. She could make a custard out of skim-milk that Dan'el liked better than mine out of all cream. But it's Dan'el's word that had there been a food-and-drugs Act in those days, Hetty would have got into the clutches of the Law!

Yet Hetty Pease was a good woman. Odd—you may say. But I don't believe she would have told a lie, out and out, unless it was to save her soul. Dan'el laughs at this. He says it's a paradox. But I believe it's as true as the things *he* says. For it was only to save her soul that

she confessed at last, when it seems to me 'twould have been a lot easier to die leaving us to think as we did.

The Peases had always lived next door to us. She and George was the last of them. "Brother George," as she called him, a railroad fireman, got into trouble in Meadowville and ran away. Afterward, we heard he was killed in a smash-up out West. So that left Hetty all alone.

If the men of our village had been seeking creature-comforts, Hetty would have been married early, for she was a good housekeeper and had considerable property. (This the Board of Foreign Missions has now; it was in her will that way.) But men are silly. 'Cause Hetty had a plain face, was—was flat-chested, as you might say, and a bit bony, they all seemed to pass her by.

Dan'el laughs when I say this, and

wants to feel of my muscle—biceps he sometimes calls it. But it's only his excuse for acting silly. Everybody can't be as plump as I am.

Well, as I said, the men of our village seemed to pass Hetty by, and this hurt her feelings. But she never let on; only, being clever in seeing beneath the surface, as they say, I know. I've seen the flesh in her cheeks crawl—Hetty couldn't flush up—when someone, not thinking she was around, would talk of the old maids. I've put two and two together till I know she had a horror of people's thinking that no man ever cared for her.

She used to come over to my home and make bold telling what she would do when she got married; sometimes talking just as if the day was set for next week a-Wednesday.

"No, siree, I'll never get married in Meadowville!" she would say. "When I get married, me and my man-to-be'll go to the City and have it done up among strangers. We'll have no such carryings-on as have disgraced this village!"

This was just after our young folks had had such a time at Amy Dill's wedding, throwing rice and old shoes, putting labels on their baggage, and driving both through the streets; literally hitched up!

As I say, she talked this way so much that I was bound to look for something. And it being Hetty Pease you could make up your mind that it would be different from other folks' happenings. When she said to me about a score of times—we'll do this and we'll do that; we'll go here and we'll go there, and sixteen other "we'lls," I just says to her, "Hetty," says I, "who's *we*?" I says it thinking to tease her, not expecting to learn anything. But

laws a-me! if she don't come as nigh a blush as I ever see her. And then looking down I see she had a diamond ring on her third finger, left hand!

"Oh, you'll learn all in good time, Mrs. Stout," she says.

She often called me so when we'd be talking of matrimony. I think it was a pretty tribute to Dan'el and the married state, which latter she so longed to embrace. It couldn't be anything else—she and I being school girls together, and she knowing Amandy was my name as well as she knew her own.

Having said that, she slips out, coy-like, and trips across the lawn to her own door as if she was but sixteen, when she was actually in her forty-ninth year!

Such action as that set me thinking. Who could it be? Dan'el says right then, "Oh, she's playing hocus-pocus with you, Amandy." But I remembered some letters the postman had been bringing; for, living side by side, he had sometimes carelessly left her mail at our door. These letters were directed to "Miss Hetty Pease," in a man's writing—big, strong characters. I remembered, too, that Hetty had been making

visits to the city of late; and being queer and always saying she'd do things different, it just popped into my head that this was her lover come at last—but not come either, since she was going to see him!

It was not lady-like, I had to say to myself and to Dan'el—for I kept nothing from him. If Hetty Pease wanted to avoid gossip in the village—but it would make more gossip than ever if she once got found out! Anyway, knowing Hetty as I did, I just said to Dan'el, "She wont do anything bad—and the world is dif-



Hetty's girl, all excitement



"I'll not get married in Meadowville!"

ferent from what it used to be." I cautioned him, and we both kept mum, though Dan'el *would* laugh in his queer way.

But when, one day, a big, broad-shouldered, fine-looking man came to Hetty's door in a closed carriage, and without saying a word to me or anybody, she went away with him, there wasn't any reason for keeping mum longer. Indeed, I thought it was time to talk to preserve Hetty's good name. What I said to the neighbors carried conviction, too, for I showed a letter from Hetty which she wrote next day, saying if it was necessary to communicate with her, it could be done by addressing "Mrs. John Wentworth, San Diego, California!"

"Mrs. John Wentworth!" I repeated. "Sounds as if Hetty did well! He certainly looked *fine*!"

Knowing what Hetty's character was,

I could just see her going straight to the minister's the minute she set foot in the city. It was in keeping with maidenly virtue and all she had confided to me. She certainly had escaped the showers of rice and old shoes; but not so with a notice in the Meadowville *Crier*. For the next day, but one, a reporter called on me and I gave him material for a long "write-up," as he called it.

Well, time went on—six months at least. Then Hetty suddenly came back to Meadowville. I call her Hetty still, though most of the village folks knew her from that time forth as "Mrs. John Wentworth." I had had nothing to write to her while she was away; but I did send her the *Crier* with the write-up of her elopement. And for this Hetty often thanked me.

I was the first in Meadowville to greet her. And seeing she wore no colors, I



As if she was but sixteen

should have guessed, but I just blurted right out, joyous-like, "Where is John—that is, Mr. Wentworth?"

She looked at her black—and then I knew! Tears came to my eyes for the blunder I had made. But Hetty remained quite composed, so far as I could see—though actually what I saw was a dozen Hetties in rainbow colors, like a kaleidoscope. My tears—you know.

"He was killed in a railroad smash-up," she explained, sighing, and was moved to sit down. We had been standing till then. That was the most emotion Hetty showed.

"Why! How wonderful—wonderful, strange!" I stammered. "That was like your brother, George."

"Yes," said she, "killed exactly like brother George." And she sighed still deeper, and I see I had added to her grief.

I made quick to change the subject as decently as I could. I welcomed her back to Meadowville, and told her how glad the church ladies would be to have her with us once more. I told her how we had missed her pies and cakes—and Dan'el

particular—her custards. If it was a lie I am sure the Lord will forgive me.

After that I shielded her all I could from the tactless neighbors. I told them her story, more of which I had gleaned from a San Diego paper which Hetty let me take. I stopped the *Crier* reporter from going to her house, and, calling him to my door, I gave him all I surmised, and let him copy the paragraph from the San Diego paper.

So Hetty slipped back into our village life—but a different woman entirely. She was a lot more important. She was on all our little charities—though for that matter she had always been; but now her name was nigh the top, and always Mrs. John Wentworth. I never see anybody improve so in dignity as Hetty did. And she was every way more agreeable. That summer the ladies elected her president of the Missionary Society.

Dan'el often remarked in those days, "She's a lot happier as a widow than she ever was as an old maid!"

Knowing how secretly ravenous she had been to get married, I looked for a return of the appetite, as Shakespeare would say. But nothing of the kind occurred. It was a year before I dared joke her on the subject. Then she seemed pleased with the banter, for it gave her a chance to dilate on the past.

"Where could I get a better name than Mrs. John Wentworth?" she says, very proud and happy-like; and the words filled her mouth like they were the heart of a rich watermelon.

She never tired of telling of her trip West; of those six happy months; how she had done this for John, and that for John; how perfectly they had got on together. Why, good land, she gave us women all points on "How to be happy though married," as Dan'el says. I do believe we all envied her those six months!

Very early our Club assigned her a paper on "Idealizing a Husband." It shocked me when I first heard of it, for I felt it would be the opening of an old wound. But Hetty handled the subject so beautifully that thereafter every paper on the marriage relation was given to her.

Dan'el says Hetty was a paradox. Her married life, he asserts, made her honest. The reason he says it of Hetty is because her church-sociable victuals became the real thing not long after she returned from the West. The first we knew she had given up making chicken-pies of veal, and now put eggs in her cakes, and left the cream in her custards. You see all those beautiful papers on frankness and freedom from deception in the married life had had their effect on her character. That's the way I explain it, and I suppose that is what Dan'el means. But Dan'el likes to be ironical.

Then the end came—very sudden. Hetty's girl, all excitement and tears, ran in one morning, moaning that her mistress had had a stroke! Sure enough! There she lay, not able to speak a word. Suffering! One could see it in her face, which was pitiful. But it wasn't physical, the doctor said. And he said she might live the day out, and she might not.

But she did live a week—and all the while there was that intense suffering in her face. Something was on her mind, and I just set myself to work to find out and relieve it. I had learned that she could move the fingers on her right hand, for once when I had slipped mine into hers she had squeezed it good. I took hers now and I said, "Hetty, do you hear me? Squeeze my hand if you do." And oh, she gave it such a squeeze!

Then I said, "You want to tell me something, Hetty?" And she gave it another joyous squeeze.

Then I asked her about a hundred questions and didn't get a squeeze to any of them. You see I didn't ask the right thing. So I said, "Hetty, you'll have to spell it to me. Does it begin with A? With B? With C?" And when I got the right letter she squeezed my hand. And so she spelt it out and I wrote the letters down, one at a time.

I AM NOT MARRIED

Not knowing where to divide them, they looked like a mere jumble at first. Then I see their meaning, and I gasped—

"Hetty, do you say you never mar-

ried that man I see you go away with?"

Such a squeeze as she gave my hand! Oh, the boldness of the thing! My face burned with shame she should have felt long since—and didn't even now. I thought of all those beautiful things she had writ down and read at our Club! Of the counsel and advice she had given the innocent girls of Meadowville!

Then I see her face was still more troubled, perhaps knowing what I was thinking; and I says, "Hetty, you want to spell out something more?" I thought it would give her a chance to signify some repentance. But after I got the letters separated into sense this is what I read:

THAT WAS BROTHER GEORGE.

A baby's breath would have blown me over then. I felt that light on my feet. Brother George! The ne'er-do-well and run-away that all Meadowville thought dead long before! What would she tell me next? Her eyes were begging to spell more, and taking her hand I began the alphabet.



Directed to Miss Hetty Pease

It was slow work and took hours, for Hetty had much to say before she could meet death with an easy mind. Painfully she spelled out how George had sent back that first false report of his death; how changing his name to "John Wentworth," he had tried to live a better life in the West.

He had married in California where he left a bereaved wife when he was truly killed—just as the San Diego paper said. But I mistook it to mean Hetty, as I mistook her to mean herself when she said, write to Mrs. John Wentworth if it was necessary to communicate with her; she being then on her way with her brother to spend the winter in his home. My blunder gave Hetty a chance to masquerade before us as a married woman. And the temptation proved altogether too much for her.

At first I didn't know what to say. I guess I just gasped. Think of all that delusion we in Meadowville had been livin' under! And Hetty, too, of all the world, the very last one I'd have given discredit for such hypocrisy. But as Dan'el says, "You never can tell—when a woman gets set on a thing."

But now she was afraid to die with the lie she had lived unrepented. She was scared lest they put on her tombstone—

Relict of John Wentworth.

misnamed so it might shut her out from the pearly gates!

"It was safe to hocus-pocus us," Dan'el says, "but St. Peter was a different proposition."

Dan'el is horrid! He laughs at me and taunts me with being fooled by her. But

I wasn't the only one. How was it with him about Hetty's pies and her custards? Besides, the female portion of Meadowville all looked to her as an authority on marriage. Indeed, she had "coached"—Dan'el's word—more than one young girl, a bride-elect. But as these are all happy wives now, I tell Dan'el her teaching must have had its source in a pure inspiration. And I'm not a bit ashamed of the comfort I gave her at the last. For she died happy, having in her mind's eye her tombstone just as I suggested it to



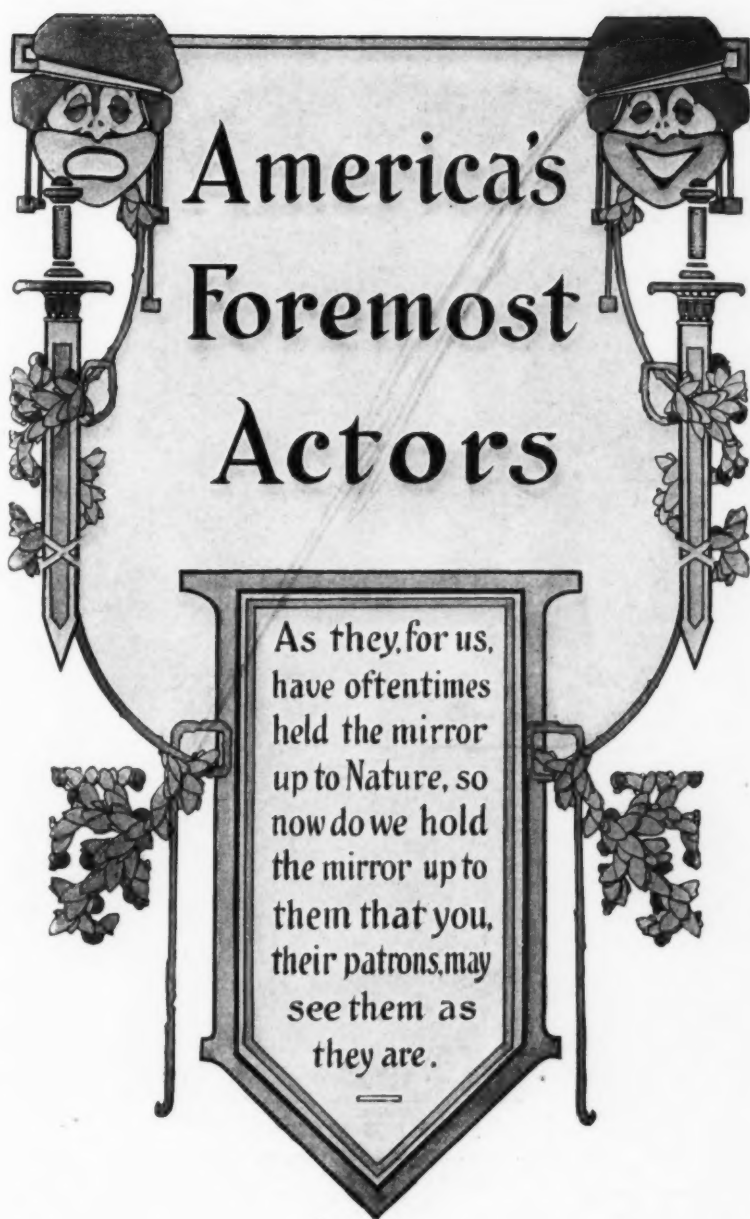
Florus Soma & Son

A paper on "Idealizing a Husband"

her and as I promised it should be—

HETTY PEASE
NEITHER DO I CONDEMN THEE.

What's more, I've never breathed it to a livin' soul, that is, *all* she told me. It was her secret, and in confession she washed her conscience clean. Dan'el says I ought to make it public property, but I don't see why. He just chuckles and says I'm an accessory after the fact, or something like that, and that in the end *I'll* have to confess. Mebbe I will, I don't know.



America's Foremost Actors

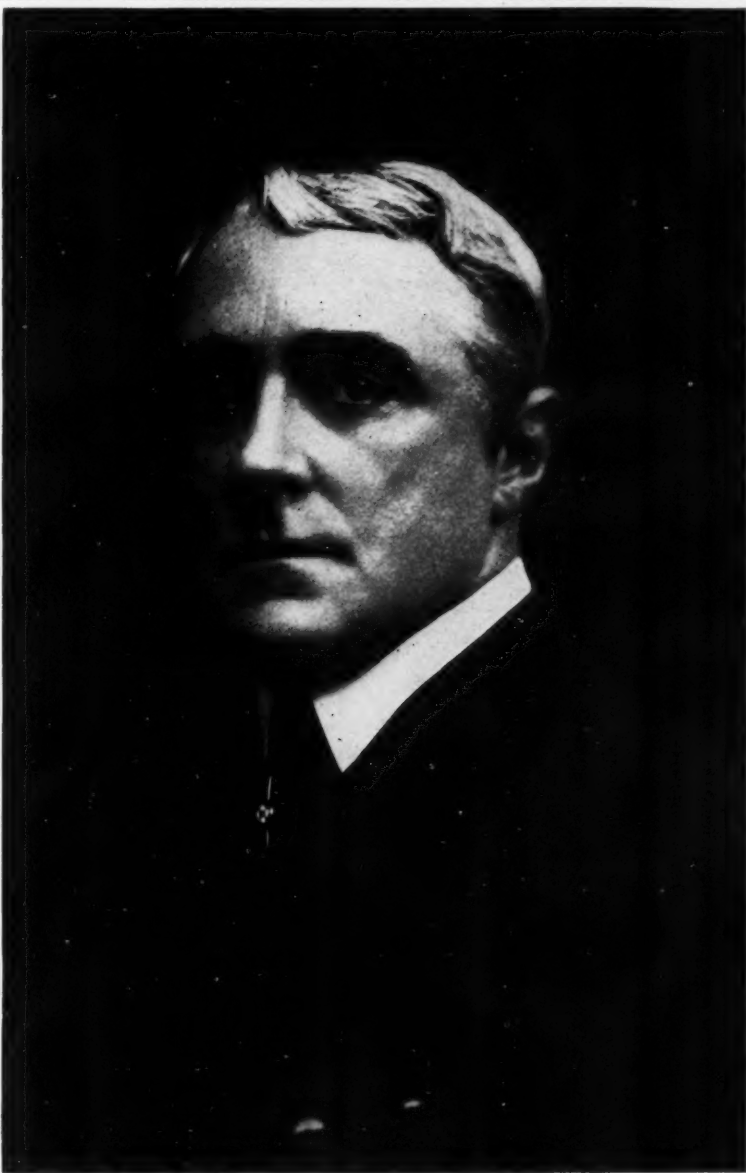
As they, for us,
have oftentimes
held the mirror
up to Nature, so
now do we hold
the mirror up to
them that you,
their patrons, may
see them as
they are.



JOHN DREW

Philadelphia is his native town; 1853 was the year of his birth. He made his first appearance in his mother's Philadelphia theatre in 1873. In 1875 Augustin Daly saw him, and that same year Mr. Drew joined Daly's company. His first Shakespearean part was *Rosencrantz*, which he played with Booth in 1876. Until 1892 Mr. Drew remained with the Daly company. That year Charles Frohman starred him in "The Masked Ball," and ever since he has been seen in a multitude of plays, American and adapted. His two most recent pieces were "My Wife" and "In-constant George." He has long been recognized as the foremost light comedian on the American stage.

Photograph by Sarony, New York



HAROLD KYRLE BELLEW

Kyrle Bellew is the son of a minister and was born in England, March 28th, 1855. From working in a ship-brokers' office he sailed to Australia at sixteen and prospected for gold. His first professional appearance was made at Solferino in 1874. His first London appearance was made in 1875. His American debut was made in 1885. From 1888 until 1898 he starred jointly with Mrs. James Brown Potter. In 1901 he reappeared in America alone, and since then has appeared here in a number of parts. In 1903 he first appeared as *Raffles*. Since then his greatest success has been in "The Thief" with Margaret Illington and Effie Shannon.

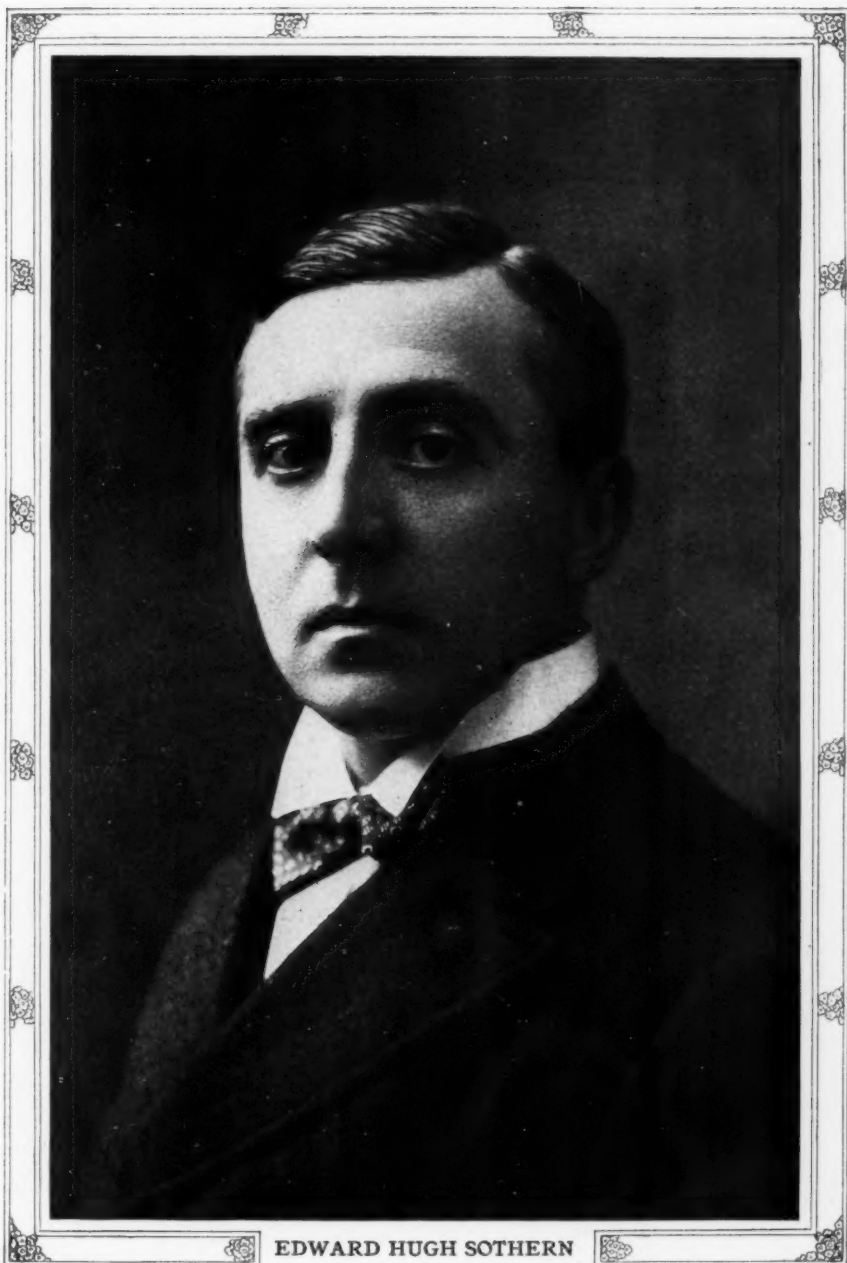
Photograph by Sarony, New York



OTIS SKINNER

Mr. Skinner was born in Cambridge, Mass., in 1863, and made his first professional appearance at Woods' Museum, Philadelphia, in 1879. The following year he joined the Stock Company at the Walnut Street Theatre. His first New York appearance was made in 1881. Later he joined Booth's Company playing small parts. In 1882 he became Lawrence Barrett's leading man. In 1884 he joined Augustin Daly's Company and remained there for five years. After two seasons in the support of Booth and Modjeska, Mr. Skinner became a star in 1894. The next year he first appeared as *Hamlet*. During 1907-8, he toured in "The Honor of the Family" and last season in "Your Humble Servant."

Photograph by Sarony, New York



EDWARD HUGH SOTHERN

E. H. Sothorn was born in New Orleans in 1859. His first appearance was made at the Broadway Theatre, New York, in September, 1879. Later he appeared in small parts with the famous Boston Museum Company and low-comedy parts with John McCullough. After two seasons in England, Mr. Sothorn returned to America, and in 1884 supported Helen Dauvray in repertoire. In 1888 "Lord Chumley" was first produced and Mr. Sothorn, on the heels of the hit he made, became the head of Daniel Frohman's Lyceum Company. In 1904 he first jointly starred with Miss Marlowe and during the past season appeared with her again in classic repertoire.

Photograph by Otto Sarony Co., New York



HENRY MILLER

Mr. Miller was born in London, in 1859. His first appearance was in "Macbeth," at the age of 19, in Toronto. In 1878, he joined Modjeska's Company and later supported Adelaide Nielson in repertoire. In 1882 he joined Daly's famous company. Followed, a season in A. M. Palmer's Company after which Mr. Miller became associated with Daniel Frohman's Lyceum Theatre organization. His next engagement was as leading man in Charles Frohman's Empire company. Mr. Miller became a star in 1896. Four years ago he became a manager and with Margaret Anglin produced "The Great Divide," following it with "The Servant In The House," "The Faith Healer" and, lastly, "Her Husband's Wife."

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago



DAVID WARFIELD

Once he was an usher in San Francisco's Bush Street Theatre; later he was given an opportunity to imitate Salvini and Bernhardt in "About Town." It was in 1890 that he fared forth to New York and obtained a small engagement in an Eighth Avenue Concert Hall. Later he toured with John Russell in "The City Directory" and in 1895 joined the Casino Company. Three years later he was made a member of Weber and Fields' forces and in 1901 appeared, under Belasco, as a star in "The Auctioneer," which has been followed by "The Music Master" and "A Grand Army Man," with Shylock impending.

Photograph by Otto Sarony Co., New York



HENRY MILLER

Mr. Miller was born in London, in 1859. His first appearance was in "Macbeth," at the age of 19, in Toronto. In 1878, he joined Modjeska's Company and later supported Adelaide Nielson in repertoire. In 1882 he joined Daly's famous company. Followed, a season in A. M. Palmer's Company after which Mr. Miller became associated with Daniel Frohman's Lyceum Theatre organization. His next engagement was as leading man in Charles Frohman's Empire company. Mr. Miller became a star in 1896. Four years ago he became a manager and with Margaret Anglin produced "The Great Divide," following it with "The Servant In The House," "The Faith Healer" and, lastly, "Her Husband's Wife."

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago



DAVID WARFIELD

Once he was an usher in San Francisco's Bush Street Theatre; later he was given an opportunity to imitate Salvini and Bernhardt in "About Town." It was in 1890 that he fared forth to New York and obtained a small engagement in an Eighth Avenue Concert Hall. Later he toured with John Russell in "The City Directory" and in 1895 joined the Casino Company. Three years later he was made a member of Weber and Fields' forces and in 1901 appeared, under Belasco, as a star in "The Auctioneer," which has been followed by "The Music Master" and "A Grand Army Man," with Shylock impending.

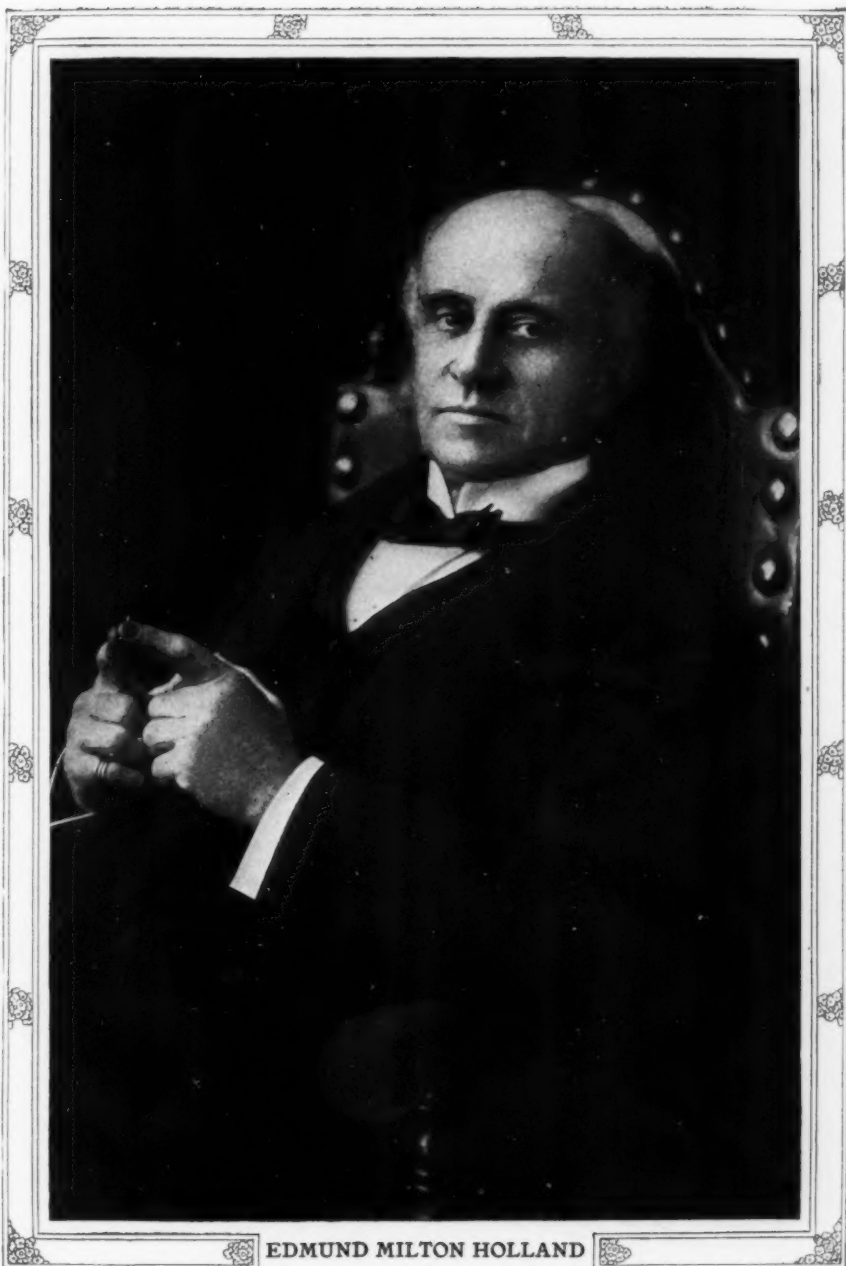
Photograph by Otto Sarony Co., New York



WILTON LACKAYE

Mr. Lackaye was born in Virginia in 1862, and made his first appearance with Lawrence Barrett in 1883. After a season in stock at Dayton, Ohio, he joined Fanny Davenport's Company and later appeared with Rose Coghlan and Minnie Maddern, before joining Augustin Daly's Company. A period of many parts followed, till, in 1892, he joined Charles Frohman's Stock Company. In 1895, he made his great hit as *Svengali*. From 1903 to 1906 he starred in "The Pit," following it with a starring tour in his own dramatization of "Les Miserables." For the past two seasons he has toured in "The Battle" and was recently seen in "Jim, the Penman."

Photograph by White Studio, New York



EDMUND MILTON HOLLAND

Mr. Holland was born in New York in 1848. He was carried on the stage as a baby by his father, an actor. As a lad he worked about the stage of Mrs. Wood's theatre, and at eighteen engaged to play small parts at Barnum's Museum. He was with Jefferson in his first performance of "Rip," and in 1867 joined Wallack's Company. Later he joined Palmer's Stock Company, making a great hit in "Jim, the Penman." In 1895-6 he starred with his brother, Joe, in "A Social Highwayman." Later he appeared in "The Duel," "Raffles," "The Battle," and "The House of A Thousand Candles." Last season he was seen with the company at New York's New Theatre.

Photograph by Sarony, New York



HENRY E. DIXEY

Boston gave him to the world on January 6th, 1859. He was ten years old when he first played *Peanuts* in "Under The Gaslight." James Maffat taught him to dance and when, in 1875 Rice produced "Evangeline" at the Globe, Boston, Dixey played the forelegs of the heifer. Through other extravaganzas Mr. Dixey worked his way up to leading parts in the Gilbert and Sullivan repertoire. July 6th, 1884, "Adonis" was produced in Chicago and later ran for 600 nights in New York. "The Seven Ages" followed. In 1894 Mr. Dixey joined Daly's Company and made a pronounced success of legitimate roles. A great number of parts followed. Recently Mr. Dixey has appeared in "The Man on The Box," and "Mary Jane's Pa."



NATHANIEL CARL GOODWIN

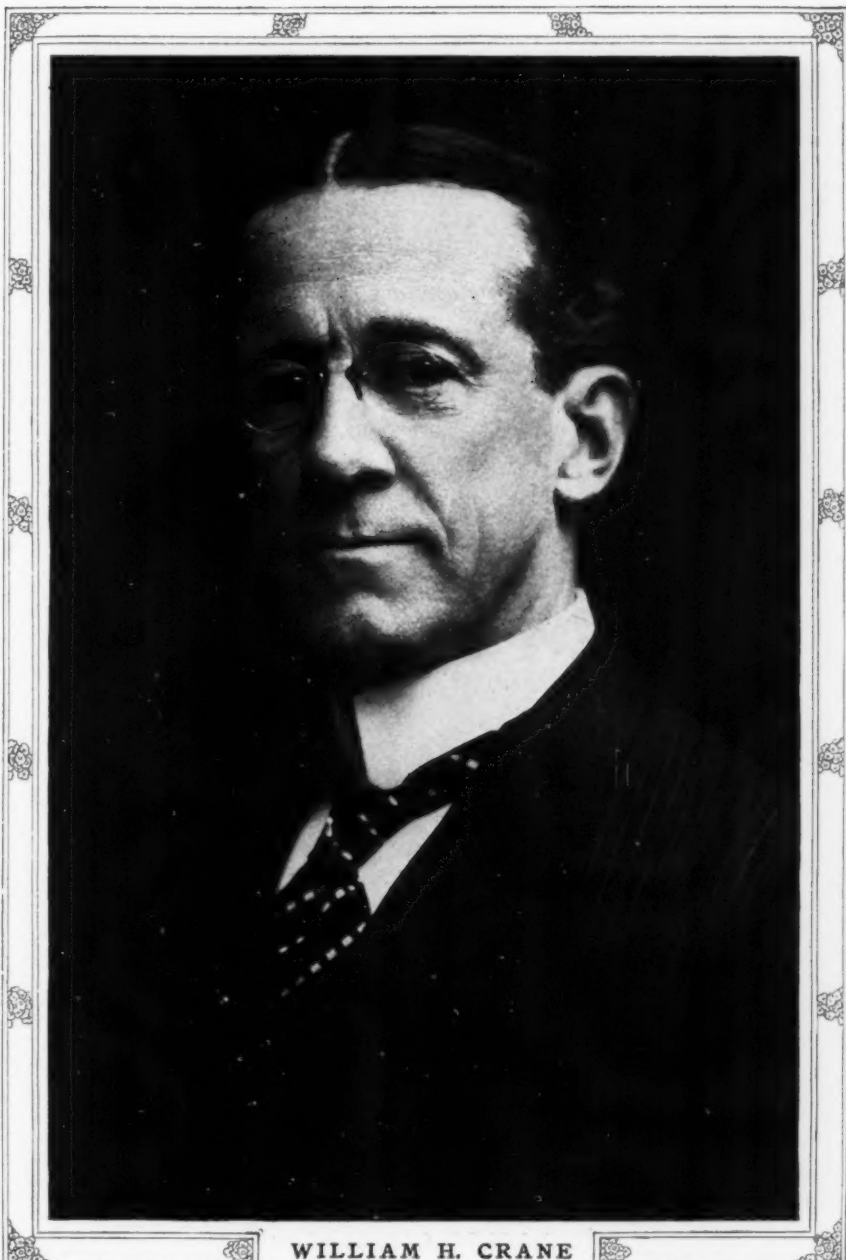
He is a Bostonian, having been born there in 1857. Although he had been employed at Niblo's in New York and the Boston Museum, his first legitimate appearance was made with Henderson's Stock Company at Providence. He fainted from fright and left the stage for a shoe-store. Later John Stetson engaged him to support Stuart Robson at the Howard Athenæum. For several years he was of Rice's Extravaganza forces. In 1889 he produced "A Gilded Fool." In 1890 he presented "The Nominee." In 1896 he presented "An American Citizen" and in 1900, "When We Were Twenty-One." Since 1907, he has appeared but a few times, notably in a revival of "In Mizzoura" and "Wolfville."



JOHN MASON

Orange, N. J. was his birthplace; 1857 the date. At 21 he stepped from Columbia College to the stage entering the company supporting Louise Leighton, at five dollars a week. After a year abroad, during which he studied singing, he returned and joined Maggie Mitchell's company. In 1879 he joined the Boston Museum company. Four years later he toured with Mantell and Goodwin, at the end of which time he rejoined the Boston Company. An English experience with George Alexander followed after which Mr. Mason starred here. A long period in vaudeville preceded his appearance with Virginia Harned in 1907 and latterly in "The Witching Hour" and in "Jim, the Penman."

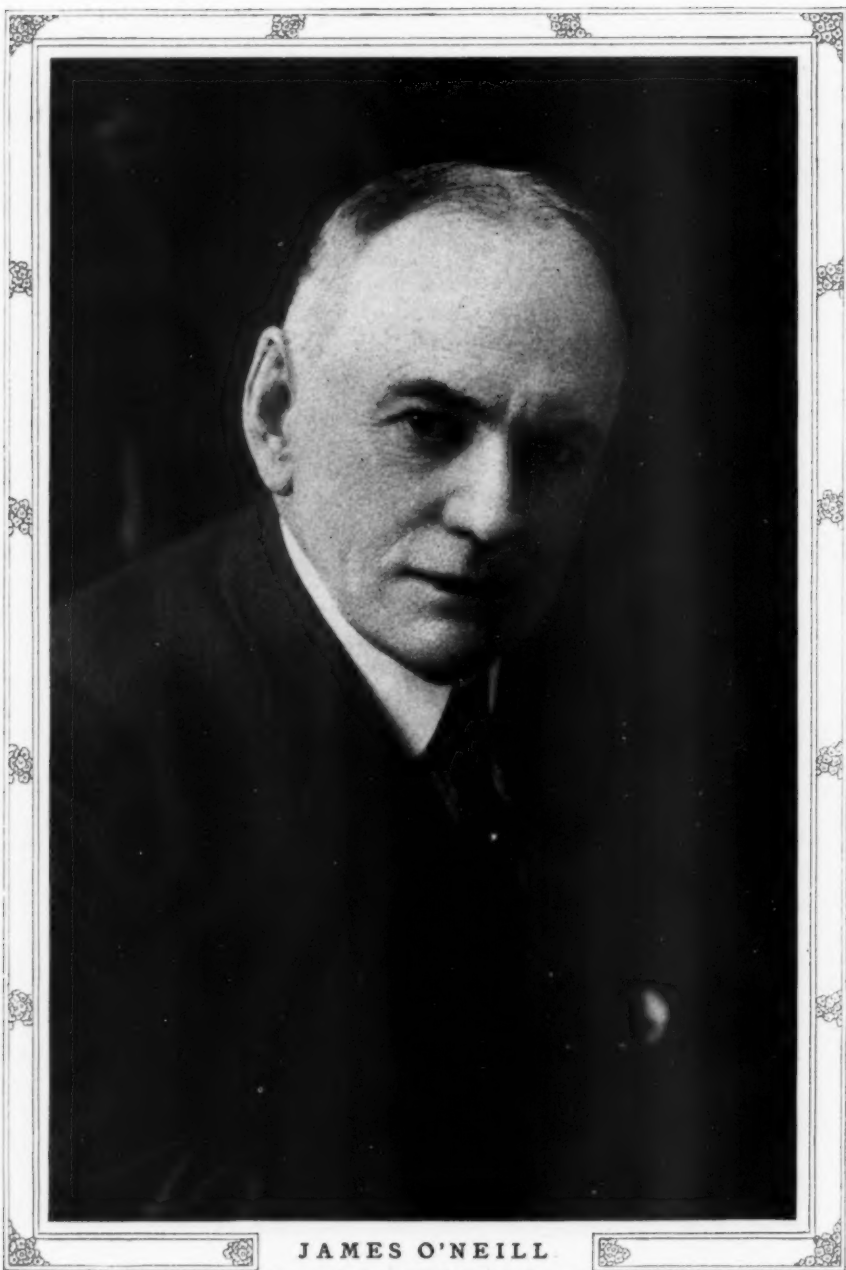
Photograph by White Studio, New York



WILLIAM H. CRANE

Leicester, Mass. claims him. He was born April 30th, 1845. In 1863 he joined Mrs. Holman's company, and for eight years played many parts, at the end of which time he became associated with Alice Oates' company. A few years later in Boston, Mr. Crane met Stuart Robson and their partnership was formed, which lasted until 1889. "The Henrietta" was their greatest success. Since '89, Mr. Crane has produced many American comedies, among them "The Senator," "The American Minister," "The Head of The Family," "David Harum" and "The Spenders." In 1907 Mr. Crane produced George Ade's "Father and the Boys," in which he has continuously appeared since.

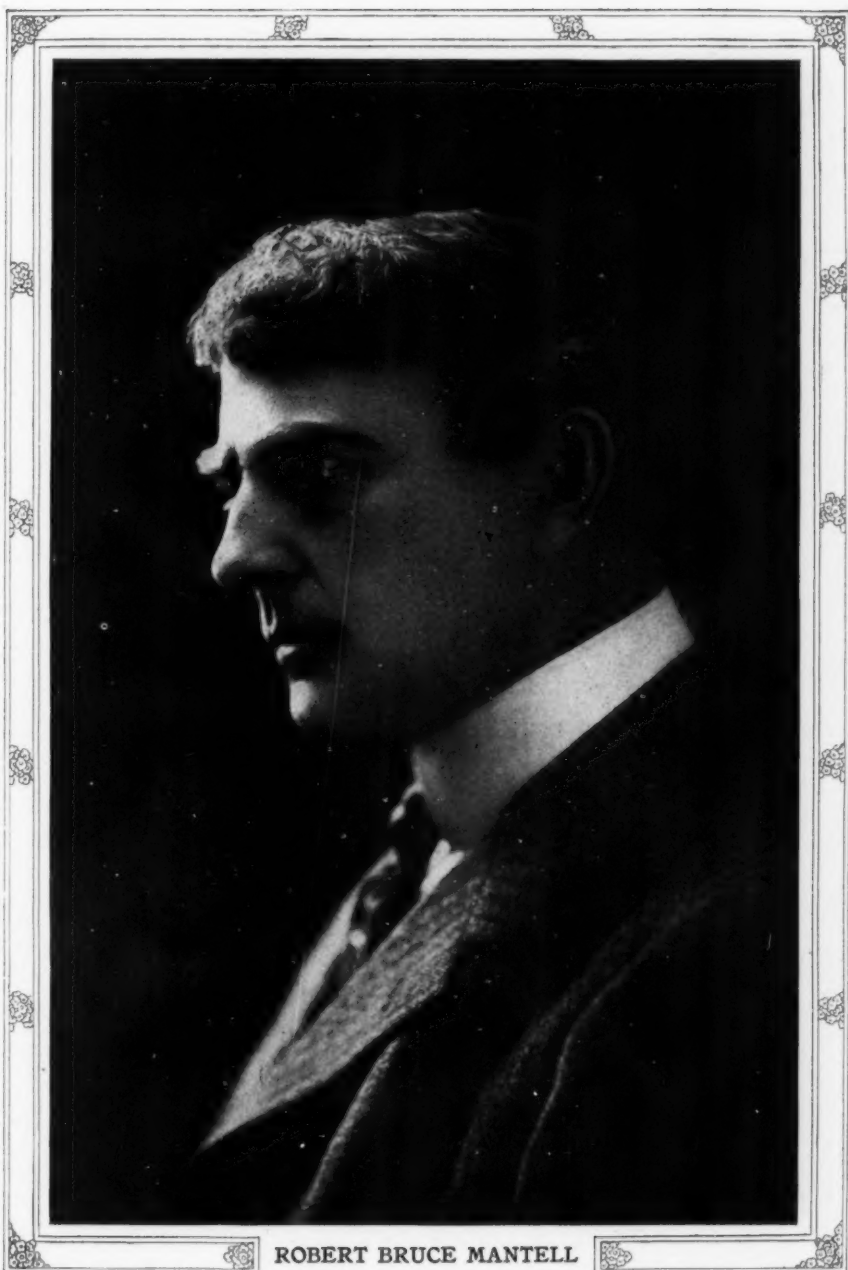
Photograph by Sarony, New York



JAMES O'NEILL

Kilkenny, Ireland, welcomed this actor into the world in 1849. In 1868 he made his first appearance with Forrest in Cincinnati. Later he became leading man at the Academy, Cleveland, playing with Charlotte Cushman. In 1871 he became leading man at McVicker's, Chicago, after which he joined Hooley's company. In 1875 he joined Palmer's company, and under the management of Stetson in 1883 first played *Dantes* in "The Count of Monte Cristo," which he continued thereafter to play for 16 years. In 1898 he played *D'Artagnan*, but his fame chiefly rests upon his performance of *Dantes*, *Virginius*, and *Julius Caesar*.

Photograph by White Studio, New York



ROBERT BRUCE MANTELL

Mr. Mantell was born in Scotland in 1854 and as a lad was interested in theatricals. Apprenticed to a wine merchant, he ran away to America, but after two weeks here, returned to England and obtained a theatrical engagement in the provinces. Later he was taken by Phelps to Sadler's Wells Theatre, London. In 1878 he came to America and made his first appearance here with Modjeska at Albany. After various engagements he joined Fanny Davenport in 1883 playing *Ivanoff* in "*Fedora*." He became a star in 1886 playing a classic repertoire and "*Monbars*." He first acted *Hamlet* in 1893. Since 1904 he has been under William A. Brady's management and is to-day the foremost actor of Shakespearean roles on our stage.

Photograph by Baker, Columbus, Ohio



HOLBROOK BLINN

As a youngster in California where he was born in 1872, Mr. Blinn made his first appearance with Frank Mayo. In 1902 he appeared in New York in "The New South." He later took the first dramatic company to Alaska. Previously he was associated with Louis James, Effie Ellsler and Roland Reed. After appearing in London with Martin Harvey, he was seen in "To Have And To Hold." In 1907 he appeared in "Salomy Jane" and later in "The Man of The Hour." In 1908 he supported Arnold Daly at the Berkeley Lyceum, but his greatest success has been in the past two seasons with Mrs. Fiske in "Salvation Nell."

Photograph by White Studio, New York